

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

**‘To work is to transform the land’:
Agricultural labour, personhood and
landscape in an Andean *ayllu*.**

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology of the London School
of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, June 2013

Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the central role of agricultural labour in the construction of personhood, landscape and work in an Andean *ayllu*. It is an ethnographic study based on fieldwork in a small subsistence farming village in the highlands of Bolivia. In employing a practice-led approach and emphasising everyday labour, ambiguity and the realities of history and political power play, rather than the *ayllu*'s 'core characteristics' of complementarity and communality, the thesis moves away from the structuralist approaches which have dominated this field of study. In this setting, agricultural activity, *llank'ay*, (to transform the land), fills and shapes the days and seasons throughout the year. *Llank'ay* goes beyond economic definitions of 'work' to include leisure, politics and everyday practice: it is bound up with myths of cosmogony, notions of value, the power of the land and a basic belief in what it is to be a human. The thesis examines the importance of *llank'ay* through several prisms: the tasks of the agricultural year and how these are crucial to the development of personhood; the mediating role of *llank'ay* in claims to land and inter-village relationships of reciprocity; the effects of Protestant conversion and the role of *llank'ay* in sustaining an animate landscape; the intersection of *llank'ay* with other forms of work; migration and the outcomes of discontinuing *llank'ay*. I conclude that in this *ayllu* the practice of agricultural activity transforms people and land, creates belonging and communality and shapes the local concept of what labour is. It in turn creates the structures and limits within which people and land can be transformed.

To Mac and Edith

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Acknowledgements

The research and writing up of this thesis was made possible by an Economic and Social Research Council Studentship (Award PTA-030-2006-00299), for which I am very grateful.

Countless people have contributed to this thesis with their thoughts, friendships and support. In Bolivia I wish to thank Ing. Walter Choque, alcalde Aniceto Cuti and the other members of the municipal office who first introduced me to Bolívar and taught me much about local politics by including me in meetings and projects across the region. I am grateful to Henry and Wilford, as well as the other employees of INDICEP (Instituto de Investigación Cultural para Educación Popular), who brought me along on their many projects and so showed me most of municipality. During my months in the village of Bolívar I boarded with Sofia Oblitas and her two children, Andrey and Belén. Her friendship and their home was an invaluable source of comfort at the first crucial stage of fieldwork. In P'iya Qayma I spent many of my days with Don Tomás Veizaga Mamani, as he prepared the fields, and Doña Nieves Ramos Chajhuari, as she herded the animals. Without a doubt I owe my greatest debt to them, Doña Juana, Doña Casimira and the other villagers of P'iya Qayma; their kindness, generosity and patience. Their lives and livelihoods are at the heart of this thesis. In Cochabamba I also wish to thank Mallku Sabino Veizaga Quispe, Sustainable Bolivia, Erik Taylor, Orlando Alandia and many more good friends.

I have benefited from wonderful years in the company of many colleagues at LSE with whom I have shared the ups and downs of this process. In particular I wish to thank Gustavo Barbosa, Max Bolt, Tom Boylston, Alanna Cant, Kimberly Chong, Agnes Hann, Michael Hoffmann, Aude Michelet, Andrew Sanchez and Cathrine Thorleifsson for good times and the countless conversations about our work which fed into the making of this thesis. I owe

a special thank you to Alanna Cant, Kimberly Chong, Stuart Sheild and Lucy Bush (with whom I many years ago first studied anthropology), for reading through sections of this thesis and providing invaluable feedback. At LSE I am also indebted to Yanina Hinrichsen, for helping me through various administrative challenges and for being a constant friend in the Department, and to my supervisor, Deborah James, without whose meticulous supervision, total commitment and support, I do not know if I would have got to the end - Thank you! To my other supervisor, Sian Lazar, who stepped in half way through this process, I am very grateful for bolstering my enthusiasm of Bolivia and pushing me to formulate my ideas.

I was lucky enough to begin this adventure under the tutelage of the late Olivia Harris. As I took my notes during my fieldwork; scribbling down my ideas in the dark evenings of the high Andes, it was always with her in mind as my reader. I continue to be inspired by her, and to write for her.

My large and wonderful family-in-law, the MacGregors, have provided great support (often in form of childcare), and much love during the making of this thesis, for which I consider myself very lucky. My extended family in Sweden and UK have encouraged me throughout my life and my grandmother, Mormor Bojan, taught us all to meet new people with open hearts. My parents, Stuart Sheild and Siv Johansson, and brother, Sebastian Sheild Johansson (whose photoshop skills came in great use), are of course fundamental to me choosing to embark on this process in the first place. My father always wanted the world for me, whilst my Mamma wanted nothing more than my happiness, the combination worked well.

Finally, I am most of all thankful to my husband Mac and our daughter Edith. Edith arrived at the early stages of writing-up and has distracted and focussed me in equal measure. Mac has been my companion throughout this whole process and I could not have asked for more. This thesis is for you two – I'll be less busy now.

Glossary and Language

Language is indicated in brackets after the word, with (A) for Aymara, (Q) for Quechua, and (Sp) for Spanish. Some Quechua words are pluralised according to Quechua grammar – i.e. *kuna*, other words are pluralised using the Spanish *s*. I have followed the most common usage in Kirkiyawí, for example: *runakuna*, but *jilanqos*.

I follow the now standardised and officially recognised Quachua alphabet which includes three vowels: a, i and u; 27 consonants: ch, chh, ch', j, k, kh, k', l, ll, m, n, ñ, p, ph, p', q, qh, q', r, s, t, th, t', w, x, and y.

<i>achachila</i> (A&Q)	ancestral spirit located in particular features of landscape e.g. mountains
<i>alcaldía</i> (Sp)	town hall, municipality
<i>almilla</i> (Sp)	black, embroidered dress worn in many rural highland areas
<i>altiplano</i> (Sp)	Andean highland plain
<i>apu</i> (A)	lord, powerful mountain power
<i>ayllu</i> (A)	kin-territorial unit
<i>ayni</i> (A&Q)	reciprocal labour exchange
<i>aynuqa</i> (Q)	system of communal fields
<i>aransaya</i> (Q)	<i>ayllu</i> division, politically superior, usually highland section
<i>awayo</i> (A)	woven shawl or carrying material
<i>barbecho</i> (Q)	opening the ground with a plough (Cf Sp <i>barbecho</i> , fallow)
<i>cacique</i> (Sp)	leader, in Kirkiyawí's case, leader of the <i>ayllu</i> .
<i>campesino</i> (Sp)	peasant
<i>campo</i> (Sp)	countryside
<i>cañawa</i> (Q)	a pseudo-cereal, is a grain-like crop which is highly nutritious

canton (Sp)	unit of Bolivian administrative structure
cargo (Sp)	community office, or duty owed to the community by its members
central (Sp)	union base
chakra (A)	cultivated field, sections of field
ch'alla (A)	libation of a beverage poured onto the ground
charango (Sp)	manodlin-like instrument, of lute family
ch'arki (A&Q)	dried meat
chicha (Sp)	maize beer
chiqote (Sp)	whip
coca (A, Q & Sp)	leaf chewed traditionally for physical effect
cocalero (A, Q & Sp)	coca grower
cholo, chola (Sp)	ethnic term for rural-urban migrant
chullpa (A&Q)	tombs of pre-Christian people
ch'uspa (A)	a pouch for coca leaves
chuñu (A&Q)	de-hydrated potatoes
chuqhu (Q)	collective labour party, labour exchanged for food, drink and coca
cocina (Sp)	household
comité de vigilancia (Sp)	vigilance committee
compadrazgo (Sp)	ritual kinship between a child's parents and godparents
curandero (Sp)	healer, diviner
diakon (German)	Baptist deacon
dirigente (Sp)	union representative at village level
evangelico (Sp)	a protestant convert
fiesta-cargo (Sp) system	system of feast sponsorship
forastero (Sp)	outsider, not living in community with original kin group
hacienda (Sp)	landed estate
hermano/hermana (Sp)	'brother'/'sister' members of Protestant churches
ichhu (A&Q)	dry clumps of grass common in the highlands
ilucta, llujt'a (Q)	chewed with coca leaves in order to help activate the alkaloids in the coca leaf

<i>imilla</i> (A&Q)	girl
<i>imitcha</i> (A&Q)	is a diminutive of imilla, denoting affection
<i>indigenismo</i> (Sp)	intellectual mestizo movement portraying Andean people as successors of pre-Columbian cultures
<i>jap'i</i> (Q)	ayllu division (minor ayllu)
<i>jaq'i</i> (A)	full person
<i>jilanqo</i> (Q)	ayllu leader, village level
<i>junta escolar</i> (Sp)	parent's association of a school
<i>kuraj tata</i> (Q)	ayllu leader, jap'i level
<i>kurakas</i> (A&Q)	ayllu chiefs
<i>lejía</i> (Sp)	chewed with coca leaves in order to help activate the alkaloids in the coca leaf
<i>lider</i> (Sp)	leader
<i>lijla (lliklla)</i> (Q)	a women's woven shawl
<i>llank'ay (llamk'ay)</i> (Q)	work, transforming the land
<i>mallku</i> (A)	condor, aymara lord
<i>mestizo</i> (Sp)	of mixed cultural heritage and descent
<i>mink'a</i> (A&Q)	collective labour party, labour exchanged for goods (or money)
<i>mita</i> (Sp from A&Q m'ita)	coerced labour system of colonial period
<i>oca</i> (Q)	sweet tuber
<i>originario</i> (Sp)	indians living with their original kin group and have rights and responsibilities to their land
<i>pachakuti</i> (A&Q)	new time, revolution, re-created place
<i>padrinazgo</i> (Sp)	god-parenthood
<i>pachamama</i> (A&Q)	fertile earth power
<i>luki</i> (A&Q)	potato used for making chuño
<i>papa whatiya</i> (Q)	baked potato
<i>phasa</i> (A)	edible lime rich earth eaten with baked potatoes
<i>pito</i> (A)	ground cereals mixed with sweet hot water
<i>pollera</i> (Sp)	gathered skirt worn by cholas
<i>pongos</i> (Sp)	unpaid serfs
<i>pongueaje</i> (Sp)	indian servitude
<i>promotor</i> (Sp)	promoter, local link to NGOs

<i>puna</i> (Q)	high altitude zone
<i>q'ara</i> (A&Q)	peeled, bare, non-indian
<i>quinoa</i> (Q)	a pseudo-cereal, is a grain-like crop which is highly nutritious
<i>reducciones</i> (Sp)	new settlements where indian communities were re-located
<i>revisita</i> (Sp)	re-visit (see <i>visita</i>)
<i>runa</i> (Q)	person, self-designation of Quechua-speaking Andean people
<i>ruta</i> (Sp)	cattle truck used as public transportation
<i>rutucha</i> (Q)	first haircut
<i>sakata</i> (Q)	loom
<i>saneamiento</i> (Sp)	process of re-titling land
<i>sub-central</i> (Sp)	union division
<i>supay</i> (A&Q)	devil
<i>suyu</i> (Q)	plot of land allocated for cultivation
<i>t'anta wawas</i> (Q)	bread babies baked at fiestas as sacrifice
<i>tata santísimo</i> (Sp &Q)	sacred staff
<i>thaki</i> (A&Q)	narrative pathway
<i>tinku</i> (Q)	meeting, ritual battle
<i>toro tinku</i> (Q)	battle of bulls
<i>tragu</i> (Q)	from Sp, <i>trago</i> , liquor
<i>urinsaya</i> (Q)	<i>ayllu</i> division, politically inferior, usually valley section
<i>visita</i> (Sp)	'visit,' census carried out by Spanish colonial administration
<i>yanantin</i> (A)	duality, symmetry, complementary pair
<i>yunta</i> (Sp)	yoke of bulls

List of Acronyms

BWA	Baptist World Alliance
COB	Central Obrera Boliviana
CIDOB	Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano
CONAMAQ	Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu
CSCIB	Confederación Sindical de Comunidades Interculturales de Bolivia
CSUTCB	Condeferación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia
DANIDA	Denmark Foreign Aid Agency
FEJUVE	Federación de Juntas Vecinales
CNMCIQB-BS	Condeferación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia – Bartolina Sisa
FSTMB	Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia
FSUTCC	Federación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INDICEP	Instituto de Investigación Cultural para Educación Popular
INRA	Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria
IRM	Indigenous Rights Movement
LPP	Law of Popular Participation
MAS	Movimiento Al Socialismo
MITKA	Movimiento Indio Túpac Katari
MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario
MST	Movimiento Sin Tierra

NEP	New Economic Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CONALCAM	Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio
PAC	Proyecto Autodesarrollo Campesino
PDM	Plan de Desarrollo Municipal
TCO	Tierra Comunitaria de Origen
THOA	Taller de Historia Oral Andina
UBB	Unión Bautista Boliviana
UN	United Nations
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance
YPFB	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos

List of Characters

Families:

Don Tomás Veizaga Mamani

Doña Nieves Ramos Chajhuari

Doña Victoria Veizaga Cruz: teacher

Doña Dominga Veizaga Cruz

Luisa Veizaga Cruz (deceased)

Pedro Veizaga Cruz

Zulma Veizaga Ramos

Israel Veizaga Ramos

David Veizaga Ramos

Don Basilio Chajhuari Chui: (widower)

Don Severino Chajhuari Veizaga: migrated, owns mini business

Don Tiburcio Chajhuari Veizaga

Doña Casimira Chajhuari Veizaga: seasonal migrant

Dionisio Chajhuari Veizaga: migrated

Don Tiburcio Chajhuari Veizaga: *jilanqo* 2008

Doña Vincenta Delgado Choque: receives potatoes from her village

Santos Chajhuari Delgado: migrated

Calixto Chajhuari Delgado: migrated

Theresa Chajhuari Delgado: temporary migrant

Nicolá Chajhuari Delgado: temporary migrant

Angel Chajhuari Delgado

Javier Chajhuari Delgado

Doña Juana Cuyo Condori (with family lands in other village)

Don Valerio Chajhuari Cunorama

Eight children including:

Eulogio Chajhuari Cuyo: in the army

Rosalía Chajhuari Cuyo: hard worker

Don Geronimo Chajhuari Mamani: *oca* thief and Bible expert

Doña Maxima Cunorama Cuyo

Two sons who have migrated

Don Valerio Chajhuari Cunorama (same Don Valerio as above)

Don Pablo Chajhuari Cunorama: *chuqhu* host in Choriparada

Don Facundo Veizaga Canchi: killed by mountain, *curandero*

Doña Efrasina Chui Ramos

Three adult children, two mainly based in Oruro

Individuals:

Doña Severina Cruz Diaz: Widow, Don Tomás step-mother with whom he does not get on

Doña Filomena Veizaga Mamani: Widow, Doña Severina's step-daughter, Don Tomás' sister

Alberto Veizaga: Doña Filomena's son

Don Gregorio Diaz and Doña Alfreda: From Vila Victoria, victims of *oca* theft

Don Benito Veizaga Chajhuari: *dirigente* 2009, deacon 2008, unmarried

Don Felipe Veizaga Condori: *oca* thief

Don Valentin Chui Cruz: *dirigente* 2008

Don Calixto Veizaga Cruz: *jilanqo* 2009

Mallku Sabino Veizaga Quispe: Living in Cochabamba, political activist

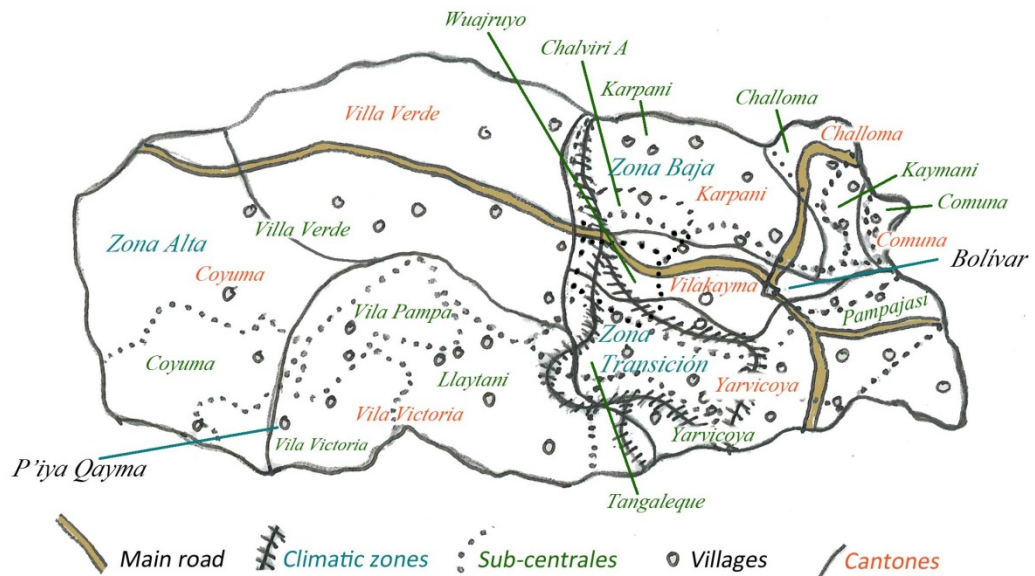
Maps



Figure 1: Map of South America, Bolivia and Cochabamba department

Ayllu Kirkiyawí/Bolívar

Municipal, union and ecological divisions



Ayllu divisions



Figure 2: Map of Bolívar/ayllu Kirkiyawí

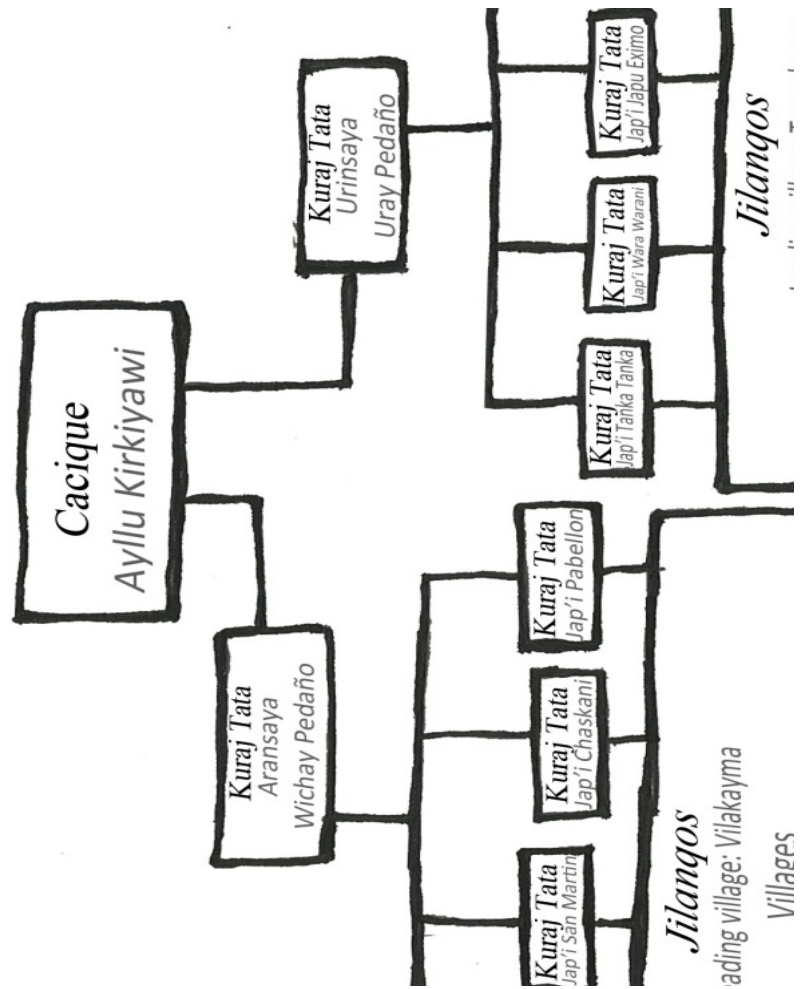


Figure 3: Ayllu authority structure

Chapter 1: Introduction – A local concept of work

The Andean highlands, where this study is set, is a dry and rocky terrain with extreme temperatures and little vegetation. The area suffers intense erosion and the strong winds often carry sand from the crumbling mountains. While the mines are rich in minerals, the earth appears infertile. Making the earth 'bear fruit' (Harris 2000) demands constant engagement; it must be worked all year round in order to produce the basics for survival. In *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, labouring the land is the daily activity of people, and most tasks in life are ultimately seen as feeding into the effort of working the land; throughout this thesis I gloss the Quechua word for work, *llank'ay*, as meaning 'to transform the land.'¹ Through agricultural labour both people and land undergo processes of transformation: men, women and children mould their bodies, hone their skills and as they work the land they gain their personhood and become *runakuna* (Q) (full humans); the land changes in shape and colour as it is transformed from an inhospitable surface to ploughed and productive fields.² People who do not work the land and land that lies un-worked are both referred to in Kirkiyawí as *q'ara* (Q&A), meaning peeled, bare and naked. Thus the productive interrelationship is crucial to the full development of both.

The central question of this thesis is the nature and character of the local concept of *llank'ay*. In Kirkiyawí there is no easy separation between the sphere of work and that of non-work. Work, *llank'ay*, is not simply performed in order to survive, and the *ayllu* organisation is not just a mode of production which sustains and reproduces subsistence farming. Rather, *llank'ay* is performed because it is valued (Harris 2007), as a blessing, producer of *runakuna* and cultured land (cf Fajans 1997; Munn 1986; Myers 1986; Sangren 1987, 2000; Turner 1979, 1984, 1995). I argue that

¹ See page 54 for discussion of the word *llank'ay*

² *Runa* (Q) meaning person, *kuna* is the plural ending. Throughout the thesis Q denotes Quechua, A, Aymara and Sp, Spanish,

agricultural labour must be understood as a creative process that constitutes the primary mode through which people conceptualise personhood, relate to their surrounding land, and create communality. I look at *llank'ay* as a practice, rooted in routine and physicality and creating processes of change. I argue that its main character is the transformation of people and the transformation of land, from wild to cultural and productive – this is its definition and the source of its value. Through the prism of *llank'ay* the surrounding land can be understood as a vernacular and animate landscape whose vitality is sustained and engaged through labour. The concept of *llank'ay* can also incorporate non-agricultural tasks which, in accordance with their power to transform land, are included within the same conceptual category: activities which are more obviously related to the transformation of earthly substances, such as weaving, as well as those of political engagement and sometimes urban based paid labour. In this investigation into what *llank'ay* is and does – and thus how the local concept of 'work' is developed – it will be demonstrated that other aspects of Andean life, such as land management, communal labour, religion, local politics and migration, are also illuminated through the lens of *llank'ay*.

Whilst I argue that *llank'ay*, just like the *ayllu*, is a very Andean concept, it is also affected and shaped by wider societal factors. In this thesis I specifically elicit information about the concept of work in contexts of change, such as conversion and migration – these events twist, test and expose what *llank'ay* is and does. Not only does the context offer insight into the meaning of *llank'ay* but these wider societal shifts also affect and change it. In order to understand how *llank'ay* is constructed (its symbolic context) and how it plays out we need to also understand what is entailed by the transformation of people and land

While I confirm that the *ayllu* is profoundly infused with power and hierarchy, and that significant internal and external political and economic structures affect peoples' lives and minds, my aim is to add nuance to the accounts that privilege structuralism as a foundational analysis of the *ayllu*,

by employing a more practice-led approach to *ayllu* studies.³ As Lazar (2008:10) has pointed out, in its studies of *ayllu* 'core characteristics,' the anthropology of the Andes has tended to stress structural coherence (e.g. Abercrombie 1998; Carter and Mamani 1989; Fernandez Juarez 2005; Harris 2000; Heath 1987; Saignes 1993; Urton 1981). A focus on *llank'ay* shows how identities, rights and relationships are constructed through long term negotiation and through the everyday practice of work. Although there is plenty of regional work which bring practice and process into their analysis of personhood and identity (e.g. Abercrombie 1998; Canessa 1998; Harris 2000; Orlove 1998; Reeve 1988a; Van Vleet 2008; Weismantel 2001) there has been less emphasis on these matters in relation to the consideration of work. Studies of agricultural labour in the region, while rich in ethnographic data on rural livelihoods and work, tend to focus their analysis on how the *organisation* of labour creates class, or emphasise the economies of households rather than on the outcomes of the physical practice of labour itself (e.g. Urton 1981; Gose 1994; Mayer 2002).

The central concern to theorise the links, in the Andes, between *llank'ay* and other forms of work, personhood and agentive land, provides the structure for this thesis and lies at the heart of each chapter. Its main contributions can be divided into two areas: 1) an expanded notion of agricultural work and its value; and, 2) the various insights that are offered when work is used as an analytical gateway into themes such as landscape, personhood/indigeneity, conversion, local politics and migration.

Expanding the definition of *llank'ay* beyond agricultural labour, I show how it encompasses transformative activities which fulfil a blessed obligation, develop full people, enable salvation, and make the land productive and animate. Whilst the importance and character of *llank'ay* in the village of P'iya Qayma is something which I suggest has been affected by the

³ In employing the term practice I refer to the works of several writers: Bourdieu 1990, 1977; Giddens 1984, 1979; Ortner 1984; Sahlins 1981, in particular that which emphasises physical and mental routines: Giddens 1984; Reckwitz 2002, history: Ortner 1984, 2006; Sahlins 1981, and that locates the nexus of peoples' engagement with the world in the human body: Bourdieu 1990, 1977; Foucault 1979; Giddens 1984, 1979.

conversion to Baptism that took place in the 1980s, I also develop *llank'ay* as an analytical tool through which to understand Andean lives and livelihoods, both in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí and beyond. I suggest that *llank'ay*, practice and process, both accurately describes my specific field setting as well as being useful in understanding *ayllus* across the Andes. The theme of transformation is very important in the Andean setting. Whilst structural approaches focus more on the poles, positions of alterity (e.g. wild and cultured, *runa* and *q'ara*), I suggest that it is in fact the process of transformation, and the work that is invested in this, which is particularly characteristic of the Andean region, and by understanding the central place of projects of transformation we are better equipped to understand Andean lives and livelihoods. In particular, I demonstrate the transformative character of agricultural work, *llank'ay*, evidence its central positions in *ayllu* life, and impact on themes such as personhood, migration, sociality, conversion, landscape and local politics.

With regards *llank'ay* as an analytical gateway; in Chapters 3 and 4 I discuss the important link between *llank'ay* and *ayllu* personhood, being a *runa*, and in Chapter 7 employ this link to interrogate processes of migration. I show that *llank'ay* both enables the flexibility of *runahood*, and sets its limits. Because of the specific meaning and value of *llank'ay* I am able to offer a nuanced understanding of the effects of migration on *runahood* and ethnic identity. As will be discussed in detail later in this Introduction, the wider regional literature generally connects ethnic/indigenous identity and *runahood* with communality and social networks in rural contexts. Because my analysis argues that it is not general rural life or rural social relationships, but something particular about rural life (i.e. *llank'ay*) which is key to ethnic/indigenous identity and *runahood*, I demonstrate that it is possible to maintain *runahood* when engaging in seasonal migration by continuing to perform *llank'ay*, and that people have strategies in place to do this. This offers a complex analysis of indigenous identity and the impact migration has on this.

In terms of conversion and landscape, the concept of *llank'ay* again helps us gain insight into the multifarious impact of shifting religious practice and the place of animate land. In Chapter 5, I detail and emphasise the diversity of experience of protestant conversion in this area. Protestant practices in rural areas have received relatively little attention compared to urban Protestant communities or rural Catholic communities. Studies of religion in Catholic villages have fleshed out and so evidenced the porous and varied practice that exists. I aim to demonstrate how Protestantism too, is a diverse and unpredictable practice, partly this is due to the version of Protestantism that any one converted village or individual is privy to, and partly it is due to how that village and those individuals then make sense of Protestantism in the context of their lives, beliefs and values. I argue that Amerindian consumption of Protestantism (as discussed by Gros 1999) is not just a creative conscious process but also about chance, personalities, infrastructure and communication. Converts do not have access to the same story, many cannot read the bible, the urban based pastors visit different communities to varying degrees depending on available transport, reception for the evangelical radio programs vary throughout the region. Therefore Protestantism does not reach converts in the same shape – people are exposed to slightly different versions. The converts then construct a religious world from their perspective as *ayllu* members and previous Catholics. The discussion in Chapter 5 describes how work and its productive powers are crucial to the effects conversion has on the relationship between people and land.

Local politics and in particular the relationship between the *ayllu* and the union is also illuminated by a deeper understanding of *llank'ay*. Tasks undertaken within either of these organisations are understood as valuable in reference to a basic belief in what work, *llank'ay* is and does. The result of this is that *llank'ay* works to conflate the *ayllu* and union in the rural setting. This also feeds into the discussion of non-agricultural work being defined as *llank'ay* which, as mentioned above, illuminates the consequences of migration in terms of personhood.

This introduction begins with a description of the field site, *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, the larger village of Bolívar and the smaller one of P'íya Qayma. Following this, I review the substantial bodies of literature on the subjects of the *ayllu*; labour in anthropology; labour in the Andes; and, ethnicity, race, indigeneity and *runahood* in the Andes, in order to contextualise the arguments I present in this thesis. My thesis necessarily is located within a contested 'anthropological space' of these literatures: the *ayllu* has become a key area in which certain debates and topics are privileged while others, such as work/labour, remain in the background. After this discussion of the literature, I address the ways in which my methodology shaped my fieldwork, and my employment of certain terms and language in this work. I conclude with a thesis outline which details the themes and arguments of each chapter.

The Field Site: Bolívar and P'íya Qayma in ayllu Kirkiyawí

The *ayllu* is a rural highland indigenous 'unit' that organises people, land and work. Territorial units referred to as *ayllus* first existed within the Aymara kingdoms. Between 1100 and 1470, the epoch between the big empires of Tiwanaku and Inka, large ethnic polities dominated the highlands of what is now Bolivia.⁴ Its present-day inhabitants are subsistence farmers who are among the poorest people in Bolivia and in the wider continent.

Ayllu Kirkiyawí sits perched on a mountainside in the range *Cordillera Central*,⁵ not far from where the mountains flatten out onto the vast plateau

⁴ Tiwanaku empire. Its centre, the now archaeological site of Tiwanaku, is close to lake Titicaca and at its height the empire incorporated much of present-day Bolivia, Peru and Chile. It was at its strongest between 500AD and 1000AD. The empire declined before the rise of the Inkas, probably due to extended drought (Klein 2003).

Inka empire. In the language of the Inka, Quechua, the name of the empire is Tawatinsuyu (literally, four corners). The empire began taking shape in Cuzco, Peru, in the beginnings of the 13th century. In a century the empire had expanded into Ecuador, Columbia, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile. Though huge, the empire was short-lived and fell with the Invasion of the Spanish, led by Francisco Pizarro. In 1533 the last sapa Inka, Atahualpa, was killed and by 1572 the last strongholds of the Inkas had been completely conquered.

⁵ *Cordillera Central*, situated between the *Cordillera Occidental*, which is characterised by volcanic activity, to the west, and *Cordillera Oriental*, which tumbles down into the lowlands and Amazon, to the north and east. The *Cordillera Central* includes several

of the *altiplano*.⁶ It lies to the north of northern Potosí, an area which has attracted much anthropological interest as it appears as a 'stronghold' of Aymara culture and archetypal highland indigenous life. Kirkiyawí is located in the Cochabamba department, which has long focused on large-scale grain and food production in its valley lands and has historically been a strong base for union organisations. The Inka language, Quechua, was introduced to the region during the expansion of the Inka empire in the 13th century and then established as the *lingua franca* by the Viceroyalty of Peru which wanted all indigenous people to speak the same language in order to simplify its governance. *Ayllu* Kirkiyawí, as a result, is a Quechua-speaking area, with a pervasive presence of the peasant union, yet in most other respects it is very similar to the neighbouring Aymara *ayllus* of northern Potosí.

A turbulent history, with shifting political influences that implemented layer upon layer of organising institutions, has left its mark on the area. Upon arriving there, I was faced with an overwhelming amount of information regarding the organisation and administration of land: what is today regarded as *ayllu* Kirkiyawí corresponds very neatly with the municipality of Bolívar, which also maps exactly onto the province of Bolívar.⁷ The area is generally spoken about as being split into the geographical halves of *zona alta* and *zona baja*, sometimes a *zona transición* is distinguished.⁸ Bolívar includes 58 villages and while the *ayllu* divides the region into two sections – the *aransaya* (Q), the *urinsaya* (Q), and below that eight *jap'is* (Q) (also referred to as minor *ayllus*) – the municipality organises the land into 8 *cantones* (Sp).⁹ In addition to its involvement in governmental and

peaks over 6000 meters and has high deposits of minerals and tin.

⁶ The high plane drainage area situated at around 4000 meters, between the peaks of the great *Cordilleras*. It spreads a large area including parts of northern Chile, northern Argentina, western Bolivia and southern Peru.

⁷ In most other cases, provinces are bigger than municipalities and often both cross-cut *ayllus* but in the case of Kirkiyawí/Bolívar the three cover an almost identical area. Bolívar province used to belong the neighbouring province of Arque and when they were awarded provincial autonomy in 1985 the new area was too small to be sub-divided into more than one municipality.

⁸ The *zona alta* and *zona baja* are also referred to as *puna alta* and *puna baja*.

⁹ In Kirkiyawí the *aransaya* and *urinsaya* also go by the specific place names of Wichay Pedaña and Uray Pedaña respectively.

The *jap'is* are roughly equally sized areas, each comprising six to eight villages. The

indigenous institutions, there is also a system of organisation around agricultural unions. Its people are members of the Cochabamba Rural Labourers' Union (*Federación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba*, FSUTCC) and the area is organised into union units – one *central* and fourteen *sub-centrales* (Sp).¹⁰ Thus, the same area of land is simultaneously part of four different active political structures: the indigenous nation; local municipal government (which is directly connected to central government); the provincial government (which is organised through departmental politics); and the national union (*sindicato*, Sp). (See Figure 2 for maps of these divisions). The presence of these multiple nodes of influence and the divergent way in which they organise and engage with their constituent villages makes for contradictory and often confusing local political structures. The different divisions are variably invoked strategically by *ayllu* inhabitants and the organisations themselves, depending on their ever-changing abilities to access resources or wield power. But, as will be addressed in Chapter 6, the organisations are also conflated and their divergent ideological underpinnings are blurred in the humdrum of everyday life.

In terms of political positions each organisation includes its own hierarchy of representatives and leaders which is populated by individuals who have attained their seats through various systems, for instance, election, nomination or rotation. Within the *ayllu* organisation in Kirkiyawí the *cacique* is at the top of the hierarchy (See Figure 3). Whilst most other *ayllus* have done away with their hereditary lords, Kirkiyawí is unusual in its authority

aransaya jap'is are; Wilaxi, San Martín, Chaskani and Pabellón. The *urinsaya jap'is* are Ch'aska Pukara, Tanka Tanka, Wara warani, and Japu Eximo.

Cantones are the administrative unit immediately below province level, often based on colonial *reducciones* which were set up gradually in the mid-20th century. While they have officially lost political influence to the municipality and there are no canton leaders or representatives in Bolívar today, they have retained a geographical presence and people still think in terms of cantones; much municipal and other development work in the area is usually organised through the unit of the canton. The eight cantones of Bolívar are: Coyuma, Villa Verde, Vila Victoria, Karpani, Vilakayma, Yarvicoya, Challoma and Comuna.

¹⁰ The *central* is Bolívar and covers the whole municipality. The fourteen *sub-centrales* are: Coyuma, Villa Verde, Vila Victoria, Vila Pampa, Llaytani, Tangaleque, Wuajruyo, Chaviri A, Karpani, Yarvicoya, Pampajasi, Kaymani, Challoma and Comuna.

structure as the role of the *cacique*, the head of the *ayllu*, remains hereditary, and is thus not accessible to any man in the *ayllu*.¹¹ Another leading figure in the *ayllu* is the *mallku*. How an individual secures the title or position of *mallku* is opaque in Kirkiyawí.¹² Most people who become *mallkus* will have previously served in a junior position and thus proved their worth as *ayllu* leaders. But there was no generally recognised rule as to how an individual might become a *mallku*, although the process of appointing a *mallku* involved nomination - often self-nomination - followed by majority consensus. Below the *cacique* sit the two *kuraj tatas*, one for the *aransaya* and one for the *urinsaya*. There are an additional 8 *kuraj tatas*, one per *jap'i*. Below the *kuraj tatas* are the *jilanqos*, each representing a village. At the beginning of every new year, in early January, there is a rotation of roles. A new *jilanqo* is appointed in every village and a new *kuraj tata* for every *jap'i*. P'iya Qayma is one of six communities in the *jap'i* of Tanka Tanka and the idea is that every year the *kuraj tata* is selected from a different village. It is the locality as well as the people that are being rotated and people often comment that '*todos lugares*' (all places) need representing. People are not voted in or nominated to become *jilanqos*, instead a list of all eligible men is brought out and the man whose name is next in line is asked to step up to the responsibility. In

¹¹ Kirkiyawí has, then, retained its *cacique* family, whose genealogy can be traced back to at least 1646, when colonial documents show the signature of *Cacique* Juan Domingo Fernández Mamani. In Kirkiyawí some people were able to cite the names of the *caciques* going back 3 generations - Don Marcos Mamani, his father Nicanor Mamani Ibarra and his grandfather don Mariano Mamani. The present *cacique*, Vicente Arias, is the nephew of Don Marcos Mamani. The position passed to him when Don Marcos died leaving no male heirs. The responsibility of safeguarding the ancestral papers was handed down to his daughter. In waiting for her to produce a son and heir to the *cacique* post, Don Vicente Arias has been appointed by the *kuraj tatas*. Don Vicente sometimes goes by the name of Mamani in order to associate himself with the legitimate line of the *caciques* of Kirkiyawí. The role of the *cacique* was explained to me as that of ultimate arbiter of internal and inter-*ayllu* land disputes and the keeper of the ancestral papers which at one point were key to safeguarding the *ayllu* lands and are still considered to be the most effective protection against any future infringement of their lands. The *cacique* calls the monthly *ayllu* meetings in his village of Wallata waycha, which is located in the middle of the *ayllu*, but in practice he is rarely in Kirkiyawí, instead he spends much of his time in Oruro.

¹² A *mallku* is a leader, or big man, who in Kirkiyawí stands outside the official hierarchy. The term is commonly used in the IRM, and the leaders of the movement will often be addressed as *mallkus*. *Mallku* or Gran *mallku* would prob have been the titles of the Aymara kings but does not at present denote a pan-Andean official role within the *ayllu*. Many of the villagers were unsure of how the *mallkus* in Kirkiyawí had secured their positions. According to the *ayllu* authorities I spoke to, a *mallku* in Kirkiyawí can retain his title as long as the *kuraj tatas* are satisfied with his work.

theory he must be a married man with an established household, an *originario* of the village who is engaged in working the land. The election of the *kuraj tata* is in part about whose turn it is in the sequence, but also about a man's proven ability to shoulder the responsibility properly. Not everyone will be a *kuraj tata* in his lifetime and those selected must have demonstrated their suitability during their times as *jilanoqos*. The various positions in the union and municipality and their relationship to the *ayllu* leaders will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Bolivar and P'iya Qayma

In *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, I focused my research on the large village of Bolívar, the municipal and provincial capital, and the smaller village of P'iya Qayma. The commercial centre of the province, Bolívar is a bustling little place with a population of about 600 people; there are several small shops which sell beer and have tables and chairs set out for their customers, and a handful of boarding houses serve hot meals.¹³ It sits in a small valley where a wide, shallow river flows, and is surrounded by sandy, bare red and yellow hills. While it is isolated from urban centres and positioned half a day's bus ride from any of the main roads that run through the country, it is the hub of the region and draws people from a wide area. In the mornings, children come sauntering down the hills from the surrounding villages to attend the secondary school, and the old and infirm fill the waiting rooms of the clinic. Jeeps and motorcycles belonging to the municipal office or NGO workers speed noisily through the main square. Outside Doña Remijia's boarding house a queue forms early every day for one of the only two phones in the municipality, as people anxiously wait to receive their weekly or monthly calls from relatives who have gone to the cities, or abroad to far-flung places such as Argentina and Spain. On Sundays, people walk along the riverbed from the surrounding villages to attend the church service and to visit the small weekly market where food and other staples are bought and sold.¹⁴

¹³ The shops also sell fruit, bread, spirits, *chicha* (maize beer), cigarettes, coca leaves toilet paper, candles and various canned food stuffs and sweets.

¹⁴ Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) active in the area are the Christian charity, *Vision*

Unlike the nearby village of Sakaka in the department of Potosí, Bolívar is not an important historical centre. It only became the hub that it is today in 1985, when the village was declared the capital of the newly established province and municipality of the same name. But it has certainly been populated for centuries and according to local myth Simón Bolívar, the ‘liberator of South America,’ passed through the village twice, stopping to water his horses; hence the village, and subsequently the province and municipality, were given the name Bolívar.

The village of P’iya Qayma, where the majority of fieldwork was undertaken, is one of the more remote villages in Kirkiyawí, located a long day’s walk away from the village of Bolívar, and several hours from the main road that snakes through Kirkiyawí. With no public transport available between P’iya Qayma and Bolívar, the village is relatively disconnected from its provincial capital. Instead, people in P’iya Qayma travel more regularly to the old mining town of Oruro, a five-hour truck ride away. With a population of a quarter of a million, Oruro is a destination for many rural migrants: the large markets and mines, and construction industries, are important sources of paid work. Twice a week an old Volvo cattle truck passes by P’iya Qayma on its way between Oruro and Sakaka, and this is the only form of public transport available between P’iya Qayma and an urban centre. It is generally full to the brim with adults and children, sacks of potatoes, tied up sheep, poultry in boxes, bicycles, yellow gas canisters, straw mattresses and sometimes even pieces of furniture.

P’iya Qayma sits at an altitude of 4,200 meters above sea level. The temperature drops below freezing at least 150 nights of the year, but in the daytime the sun is strong. In comparison with Bolívar, P’iya Qayma is still, open and quiet. The houses are spread far apart and few vehicles, other than

Mundial (World Vision), and the Bolivian charity, *Instituto de Investigación Cultural para Educación Popular* (INDICEP). There is a small police station manned by one police officer and his assistant, both of whom spend most of their time sunning themselves on a bench in the main square. There is a health clinic with a Doctor, two nurses and two ambulances. The clinic is always crowded as it is one of only a few in the municipality.

the bi-weekly truck, pass through the area. Nestled between peaks and hills and overlooking a wide expanse, P'iya Qayma feels both exposed and protected. On the northern side of the village lies the long mountain of Tanqatanqa whose plateau top stretches out into the distance, its bottom skirted by a string of villages. At P'iya Qayma's back, to the west stands Wayna Tanka, a single, solid peak thickly covered in tiny white flowers in summertime. Jutting out in front of Wayna Tanka is the rocky outcrop of Warp'iyta. On occasion, the lone condor that lives among the crevices of Warp'iyta can be seen soaring above the village, its wingspan so large it never fails to impress. And to the south are hills and dips, small canyons and little streams and several hidden but well cultivated fields. Spread out at the foot of the village is a large expanse of fields and a shallow man-made lake. The view continues for miles and, in the distance, the hills of Sakaka can clearly be seen.

The 30 families of P'iya Qayma live in households positioned a few minutes' walk apart (See map of village on page 107 or at the back of the thesis). Every household has a cluster of adobe huts and stone-walls surrounding its homestead. The main hut is the kitchen, with the adobe-made oven fuelled by dry llama droppings. It is the hub of the home and in the evenings the whole family crowds into the hut, sitting on the floor, or on the adobe made bed. They cook, talk and eat in near darkness, often a single candle and the soft glow from the oven is all that illuminates the room. This hut is also the sleeping space of the main couple and the smallest children. One or two more sleeping huts accommodate older children and visitors. Smaller huts are used for storage; potatoes, *chuño* (Q) (freeze dried potatoes) and grain sit in large sacks on the mud floor, along the walls stand tools such as wooden ploughs, picks and shovels, and from the rafters hang furs, *chark'i* (Q) (dried meat), natural and dyed wools and textiles. Layers of clothes – men's embroidered *tinku* (A&Q) jackets and western style jeans and t-shirts, and women's everyday black *almilla* (Sp) dresses and *pollera* (Sp) skirts which they don when journeying into town – are also stored in the rafters. Alongside the homestead houses are stone walled corrals for the llamas and sheep; their

thumping and grunting at sunrise and sunset fill the air, marking the passage of the days. The families that own bulls also have a stone-walled enclosure for them, and a separate storage house for fodder.¹⁵ A couple of hens are kept by most families, they are left to walk around freely in the homestead courtyard and lay eggs in the most surprising of places. In addition, all families have at least one dog for herding and many also have the company of a cat.

In the middle of the village sits the primary school and the small and cold room where the teacher, Señora Angelica, lives. The village has no electricity but it does have a solar panel attached to a small meeting hall, which works intermittently. Most of the village meetings, whether run by the *ayllu*, union, municipality or an NGO, are held here. In addition, on the evenings when the solar panel is working, the teacher runs '*Yo, Si Puedo*', a state-sponsored adult literacy programme for the women in the village.¹⁶ Many women try to attend but are often unable to because of their evening chores and their childcare responsibilities, or simply because after the long day the cold night walk to the school appears an insurmountable obstacle. When '*Yo, Si Puedo*' is not running, the teenagers congregate in the hall and use (or attempt to use) the television and DVD player provided by the municipality for the literacy programme. There is no signal for broadcast television but pirated films bought in the cities can occasionally be made to play on the DVD player. Next to the school is the relatively new Baptist church which is used every week for a Sunday service. As I discuss in Chapter 5, the village converted from Catholicism and joined the Bolivian Baptist church *en masse* in the mid-1980s. Opposite the school stands a bright orange and green health post built by UNICEF. It has been there for several years but was never opened: the

¹⁵ Bulls, rather than oxen, are used. Bulls are not traditionally neutered as the resulting change in their character might render them unsuitable for participation in *tinkus*, and certainly ruin any chances of victory in the *tinku* battles. This makes them hard to employ in domestic tasks. Cows are a very rare sight in the highlands; there is not enough forage to sustain a cow through calving and milk production. So bulls are always purchased from external market places rather than reared in the local area.

¹⁶ 'Yes I can' - Originally developed in Cuba, the program has been used in several Latin American countries. In Bolivia it was rolled out in 2006 and ran until 2012, the government claims that the literacy program has reached over 800,000 people, mainly in the rural area.

municipality has been unable to provide a doctor, nurse, medicine or equipment.

Everyone in P'iya Qayma is a subsistence farmer and pastoralist.¹⁷ Farming is small-scale and the tools and equipment used are basic. The uneven terrain and lack of money has prevented any introduction of farming machinery. Instead, they work with bull-driven ploughs, hacks, picks and hands. They herd sheep and llamas, grow potatoes, *quinoa*, *cañawa*, barley and wheat.¹⁸ According to the 2007 *Plan de Desarrollo Municipal* Report (PDM),¹⁹ 60 percent of land in Bolívar is uncultivable, but a majority can still be used as pasture land. Families do not have access to a great deal of land; the average total amount of cultivable land available to a family is 7.8 Hectares, and at any one point at least four-fifths of this land will be in fallow. However, it is labour power, technology and time that restrict levels of production, rather than the amount of land available. In each family land is divided into eight to fifteen plots in various locations, thus spreading the risk of crop failure by diversifying exposure to rain, wind and sun. A vast majority of all crops grown are used to feed the family and its animals and a small amount is put aside to be sold at markets. Although animals are sometimes eaten or sold, live animals are valuable as they provide fertiliser (sheep droppings), fuel (llama droppings) and wool (both animals). In order to maintain stable

¹⁷This is true for a vast majority of the inhabitants of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, the exception is the small group of people living in the main village of Bolívar, who either hold professional, public sector positions, such as teachers or nurses, or who have accumulated capital and opened a shop/boarding house or invested in a bus or truck and provide regular transport to and from the urban centres. The former group are mainly made up of non-locals whilst the latter are exclusively composed of sons and daughters of Bolívar. But 95% of the population work the land every day (PDM 2007).

¹⁸*Quinoa*, a pseudo-cereal, is a grain-like crop which is highly nutritious; high in protein and low in fat it contains essential amino acids and high quantities of calcium, phosphorus and iron. *Cañahua* is also a pseudo-cereal and grain-like crop which is similar in make-up to *quinoa* and superior in terms of nutrition. On average, a family cultivates about 1.5 HA every year. In 2005–2006 the average family divided its active land as follows: barley 0.67 HA (for grain and forage), potato 0.43 HA, and wheat, *quinoa* and *cañahua* 0.18 HA. Barley is grown more widely in the lower areas, whilst in the *zona alta*, where P'iya Qayma is located, potatoes make up a greater proportion (PDM 2007).

¹⁹The PDM is produced by the Bolívar Municipal office every 5 years. It is a comprehensive study and development plan that includes details on agriculture, infrastructure, education and culture. Its main aim is to inventorise successful projects and work undertaken by the municipality and NGOs in the area throughout the previous 5 years, and present a 5-year plan of future development.

numbers within the herds, slaughter and selling are carefully managed.²⁰ A family might sell 2,000 bolivianos' worth (ca. £200) of produce in a year (PDM 2007). This money will be put towards transport; school books for children; clothes from the urban second-hand markets; foodstuffs such as oil and rice; other goods such as soap and batteries; medicines for people and vaccinations for animals.

People live and work the land in nuclear families. Each family has a series of fields acquired through inheritance. The number and the size of the fields vary between families, reflecting and reinforcing inequalities within the village. In addition to the family lands, each active household has access to sections or 'strips' in the communal fields. These fields are divided up between households according to family size. Every time a communal field comes out of fallow it is re-divided among the families living in the village. The communal fields provide a significant amount of crops, but the main bulk is provided through the family fields. Usually plots of land are farmed for three years consecutively and then returned to fallow for seven years. There is some variation, however, as certain sections of land are more fertile than others and require less time in fallow. While most land is worked and inherited through the family it is in fact owned communally. Presently most of the land in Bolívar is legally titled *Tierra Comunitaria de Origen* (TCO).²¹ In a TCO, the land is owned by the community, in this case by the whole *ayllu*. No individual may sell any land within the TCO or speculate on it. From 2002 to 2007, the state institution *Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria* (INRA), which grants TCO status, carried out an investigation into the actuality and history of the area in order to assess its eligibility. As an *ayllu*, Kirkiyawí had to prove its presence in the area from 'time immemorial' and demonstrate

²⁰ On average a family will consume about 49 kg of llama meat throughout the year and 26 kg of mutton (PDM 2007). The number of animals sold in any given year is highly variable, contingent among other things on cash flow needs and the availability of green grazing grounds.

²¹ Only a majority of land in Bolívar, not all, received the TCO title from INRA. Two *cantones*, Comuna and Challoma, did not (See figure 2 for map). Because these are ex-hacienda areas, their population received private land titles after the haciendas were broken up following the agrarian reform in 1953. As they already had land deeds they decided to opt out of the TCO. With private land deeds people can do what they wish with their land, although their sub-soil resources are not protected.

that the present way of life could be identified as traditional *ayllu* culture. In Kirkiyawí the former criteria was evidenced through documents kept by the *ayllu* authorities from as far back as the 17th century showing the ancestral line of their *ayllu* leader, the *cacique*, the historical presence of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí and its dealings with the colonial state and Catholic Church over several hundred years. The process of determining whether the latter criteria was fulfilled is far more opaque.

The ayllu and studying 'indigenous people'

Understanding *ayllu* life and by extension Andean indigeneity has been central to Andean anthropology. This thesis is located within this tradition as it aims to explore the particularities of what *ayllu* life and what being indigenous means, specifically through the concept of *llank'ay*. The body of literature pertaining to the *ayllu* is a crucial theoretical context in this exploration of *llank'ay*, its place and value. Addressing the *ayllu* as an institution implies, in itself, the taking of a political position. Some scholars perceive it as a supremely cogent historical survivor and the locus of Andean authenticity, while others argue that it is a concept which is no longer existent on the ground: nothing more than the figment of scholarly imaginations. Certainly it is a term which has come in and out of academic fashion. These intellectual positions are rendered even more problematic by the work of indigenous scholars whose writings are intimately tied up in local political struggles and whose priorities are not ones of adherence to academic trends but rather commitment to political change. While the following overview may generalise over some specificities, it is important to sketch the whole terrain in order to show how my own work fits within these debates.

In my fieldsite people talk about *ayllu* Kirkiyawí as something which exists, within which they live, and that they are part of, alongside other institutions. In doing this they draw on their own lived-in *ayllu*, as well as imaginations of what it once was and what it might one day be. In addition the *ayllu* matters today because it has been invested with legal landholding powers. By taking a

process oriented approach and placing the focus on labour, I to acknowledge variation and history, whilst retaining the *ayllu* as an analytical category and a real-life place.

Those scholars who work with the assumption that the *ayllu* does in fact exist outside of academic texts, often frame their work within the debate about continuity or discontinuity, and commonly argue that the *ayllu* is marked by both. Whereas early works can be criticised for depicting the *ayllu* as an organisation without history (e.g. Saavedra 1903), later analyses of Latin America more generally made efforts to situate indigenous people within the wider society and history, and to encourage the recognition and acknowledgement of the political consciousness and engagement of the 'peasant' (e.g. Hill 1988; Turner 1988; Warren 1978).²² But they were criticised for remaining 'Western' in their perspective by overplaying and privileging certain historical moments, such as the Spanish invasion; the experiences of oppression inflicted by the colonial state and the non-indian elite; and the introduction of mercantilism and capitalism (e.g. Assadourian 1973).²³ Over-emphasising what Harris (1995b) calls 'moments of rupture', and seeing history as structured by 'big events,' served to obscure or oversimplify local history and politics. Elsewhere Abercrombie has emphasised the need to decolonise history, making the point that, in ignoring local perspectives on history, scholars have replicated the colonial project of erasing Andean forms of historical consciousness (Abercrombie 1998: XXIV).

Starting in the 1960s with the work of John Murra, there was a wave of archival and ethnographic-based studies which aimed to place the *ayllu* and

²²Much of this regional literature appeared at the same time as a movement in anthropology that was taking an interest in peasants and agrarian conflict around the world. Notable contributions within this movement include Hobsbawm (1959), Wolf (1969) and Scott (1977, 1985). Though some of the work on the agency of the peasant associated with this movement can be criticised for its tendency to interpret all activity, including complete passivity, as resistance or rebellion, it was instrumental in making an important shift which placed peasants at the centre of their own history and challenged ethnographic studies to analyse the field site from the perspective of their informants.

²³ Following Canessa (2005) I do not capitalise the 'i' in indian as people are not nationals of India and the term is analogous to *creole* or *mestizo*, neither of which are normally capitalised.

other indigenous societies of the Andean countries within their own history. This history included pre-Hispanic and pre-Inka eras. It discussed the actions of the Aymara polities and other ethnic groups throughout these times and into the present, their political manoeuvring, legal engagement, commercial activity, internal re-structuring and inter-community relationships. This line of enquiry continued through the 1970s, 1980s and into the 1990s.²⁴ In 2004 Bouysse-Cassagne, Harris, and Platt published the extensively researched and detailed *Qaraqara Charka*, this work often emphasised the continuity of the *ayllu* (see Murra, Wachtel, Revel 1986), drawing attention especially to certain core characteristics. The academic impetus to value positively the *ayllu* and its core characteristics was, in part, a reaction of academics against the negative stereotypes of indians and their culture which had dominated the discourse for centuries (Mayer 1991). These writers were very clear in their assertion that, as Rasnake (1988) put it, continuity does not equate to stasis. This wave of ethno-history both included and encouraged a fierce pride and protection over spheres of resistance and pockets of continuity, amongst 'western' writers (e.g. Harris 2000; Murra, Wachtel, and Revel 1986; Platt 1987a, 1987b, 1982a, 1982b; Zuidema 1977), and especially amongst indigenous scholars, such as Grimaldo Rengifo Vasquez (1998), Rivera Cusicanqui (1987), Choque and Mamani (2001) and other members of THOA (Taller de Historia Oral Andina), a workshop of politically engaged Aymara intellectuals (Stephenson 2002; THOA 1995).

Generally-speaking, there are a few key pockets of continuity, or elements viewed as core characteristics of the *ayllu* and particular to rural Andean life. They are: ecological logic and complementarity; kin, descent and animate land; the *cargo* system and authority structure; and communality (see, e.g. Bouysse-Cassagne 1987; Bouysse-Cassagne, Harris & Platt 2004; Earls 1989; Harris 1978, 1980, 1982; Larson 1995). A brief discussion of the main debates on the *ayllu* and how this relates to the form and function of *ayllu*

²⁴ 1970s: Spalding (1974), Murra (1975), Wachtel (1977), Rostworoski (1977, 1978). 1980s: Salomon (1980, 1985), Platt (1982, 1987), Stern (1983), Larson (1988), Rasnake (1988). 1990s: Harris (1995), Harris, & Larson (1995), Ramirez (1995), Saignes (1995), Abercrombie (1998).

Kirkiyawí today provides a context for the ethnography throughout the thesis.

Core characteristics

Complementarity has in particular come to be seen as a core characteristic of the cosmological foundations of the *ayllu* (see Arnold 1988; Astvaldsson 2000; Bouysse-Cassagne 1986; Harris 2006; Murra, Wachtel and Revel 1986; Platt 1986). Yanantin, an Andean concept of two things making a whole, (Platt 1986) has infused much of the analysis and perception of the *ayllu* and has become a rarely challenged trope for local Andean ontology. This is despite evidence which qualifies or contradicts it, including the ethnographic data provided by these same authors (e.g. Harris 1986; Platt 1986), and others who explicitly argue that the organisation of ‘vertical’ communities must be understood in terms of history, power and politics rather than symbolic logics (e.g. Bouysse-Cassagne 1987; Bradby 1982; Fonseca & Mayer 1988; van Buren 1996).

Another body of work (Arnold 1988; Van Vleet 2008) emphasises the importance of kin networks, alongside those of fictive kin, *compadrazgo* (ritual co-parenthood), which form a web of commensality, support, obligation and needs in the *ayllu*. *Padrinazgo* and *compadrazgo* carry responsibilities of sponsorship and life-long support. Harris (2000) defines the *ayllu* as a kin-territorial unit, and, in theory villages in an *ayllu* are populated by *originario* families whose claim to land is at least in part rooted in their *originario* surnames, in other words, their real or imagined descent from founding ancestors. I address both the conclusions of historians regarding the legitimacy of *originario* statuses and lineages, and the perceptions held by Kirkiyawí inhabitants themselves, in Chapter 2 and Chapter 7. In a small place like P’iya Qayma people are often – at the same time – kin and united through *compadrazgo* ties and friends; the networks intermesh. In this ‘mesh’ the ritual ties lose their distinct power to the point where they have little ability to claim any special status. Instead, as will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, everyday interactions and friendships

are the basis for most relationships.

Filial ties are also imagined between people and the land with mutual nurturing at the centre of this bond (Allen 1988; Arguedes 1956; Canessa 2012; Sax 2011). The 'special' relationship which people have with the land around them, with the *Pachamama* (deity of fertility and land), the mountains (*apus*), ancient ancestors (*achachilas*) and other chthonic powers are also recurring core characteristics of *ayllu* life, generally described as mediated through *fiestas* and rituals, the heightened moments of life (see Allen 1988; Bastien 1978, 1985; Canessa 2012; Gose 1994; Harris 2000; Sax 2011; Stobart 2006; Urton 1981). As P'iya Qayma is a Baptist village, the rituals and *fiestas*, assumed to be important mediators with the land, are not present. Instead, as Chapter 5 explores, the land remains animate through the efforts of agricultural labour, creating a powerful vernacular landscape.

Political and religious authority within *ayllu* communities is organised through a hierarchical system of *cargos*. *Cargos* are unpaid positions of responsibility and decision-making which rotate between all inhabitants; arguably this system distributes power and fosters unity as well as cultural distinctiveness (Rasnake 1988; Goodale 2001; McNeish, 2001). The *cargo* system was created from the Spanish collectives organised for the celebration around Christian feasts: *cofradías* (confraternities) (Abercrombie 1991). In Spanish and in colonial cities they were formed along guild lines, with all their mutual aid function (Christian 1981; Celestino and Meyers 1981). But in the *reducciones* (reduced settlements) they became an essential structure for the articulation of *ayllus*, sometimes with each *ayllu* specialising in a particular saint cult (Celestino and Meyers 1981; Varon 1982).²⁵ Also in elected town councils, *cabildo*, posts were instituted as rotational posts. By the mid-18th century, these civil and ecclesiastical obligations merged into a single system – the *fiesta-cargo* system (Abercrombie 1991: 106). However, both Platt (1987b) and Arnold (2006 with Yapita) argue that whilst the *cargo*

²⁵ *Reducciones*: new settlements, directly translated as 'reductions'. Sample studies indicate that huge numbers of people were resettled - one example describes how 900 communities, involving 129,000 people were reduced to just 44 *reducciones* (Klein 2003).

system solidified during the colonial years, traditions of 'passing turns' predated the Spanish invasion and were bound up in inter-*ayllu* and Inka battles over land and resulting circulation of land. This lends some support to the claim, often made by Bolivian Indigenous Rights Movements (IRMs), that the pan-Latin American *cargo* system is originally an indigenous custom. But *ayllus* are not the only indigenous organisations on the continent that practise a *cargo* system and present it as a unique marker of their indigeneity, and some writer (e.g. Sánchez 1982) argue that the notion of reciprocity in the Andean *ayllu* is simply a fantasy of equal exchange

The *fiesta-cargo* system's ability to create communality is putatively located in the distribution of power and its system of sponsorship, which ties people in reciprocal relationships, and also in a ritual space which continuously creates particular symbolic worlds (Urton 1992), as well as within the actual meetings and decision-making processes regarding communal labour and local politics (Klemola 1997), and in the ability of these processes to 'develop' people. The development of people within the *cargo* system is commonly described through the pathway of *thaki*, or *t'aki* (Abercrombie 1998; Carter and Mamani 1989; Isbell 1978; Rasnake 1988; Skar 1982; Ticona Alejo 2003). Abercrombie describes a *thaki* in the *cargo* system as the individual and collective sequences of *fiesta*-sponsorship careers – as 'substantial strings of action in movements which begin, subjectively, in one place and time and end in another' (Abercrombie 1998:320).

It is clear that the *cargo* system is not a 'pure' *ayllu* tradition. It is also true that Kirkiyawí has never, and still does not, award positions of authority based purely on rotation, instead, the *ayllu* positions of authority are assigned based on a range of determining factors including a rotative system, birth and nomination.

Communality is often cited as *the* defining feature of the *ayllu* (see Allen 1988; McNeish 2002; Rivera Cusicanqui 1997; Urton 1992), something that sets it ideologically apart from the feudal and totalitarian character of

colonial and post-colonial governments, and has become key evidence in the claims made by IRMs and indigenous scholars (e.g. Rivera Cusicanqui 1990; Gutierrez et al 2000; Choque and Mamani 2001; Ticona Alejo 2003;) to the *ayllu*'s inherently democratic nature and fundamental moral superiority to capitalism. The nature of communality within the *ayllu* has been approached through the themes already mentioned above: ecological logic and complementarity; kin and descent; and the *cargo* system and authority structure. In addition communality has also been located in the collective ownership of land (Rivera Cusicanqui 1987, 1990) in the regulation and taxation of land (Platt 1982b) and in relation to external demands, such as tribute payments to the state (Harris 2000, 1995a), as well as communal labour practices.²⁶ These labour practices will be detailed on the section on labour in the Andes.

The deconstruction of the ayllu

Faced with postmodernism, *ayllu* studies started to go out of fashion in the 1980s. The postmodern turn in anthropology implored anthropologists to look at how their own knowledge producing practices often reified the subjects of our study. New critical approaches accused scholars of not simply observing the *ayllu*, but in fact conjuring it up in a colonial search for the exotic. In 1991 Orin Starn levelled a famous criticism, accusing the discipline of obsession with documenting vanishing continuities of imagined pasts, and labelling this as 'Andeanist' (akin to Said's 'Orientalist' 1978). Starn particularly condemned the tendency to de-politicise life in the rural Andes and thereby to ignore the things that really mattered to local people, such as poverty and war. In a similar vein Abercrombie (1998) criticised the anthropology engaged with the rural areas of the region (specifically he

²⁶ There is a line of analysis in the Andean literature on communality that questions Andean communities' overwhelming commitment to communality and unity. It argues that alongside communalism are strong forces of differentiation and disunity (Albó 1977). Many of the authors discussed previously, whose work is focused on communality and group identity, acknowledge that a typical element of *ayllu* structure is also internal factionalism at the levels of family, politics and religion. Indeed McNeish (2002, 2001), Abercrombie (1998) and Urton (1992) all argue at some point that this tension between communalism and differentiation – a tension that does not need to be resolved – is at the heart of the Andean *ayllu*, and also at the heart of its dynamism.

points to Joseph Bastien (1978) and Catherine Allen (1988)) for foregrounding an 'Andean order of things,' by for instance leaving out references to Christianity and connections to urban centres, by referring to a place as an *ayllu* rather than a *canton*, or using the word *jilaqata* rather than *cacique*. Orlove and Guillet (1985) argue that comparative studies demonstrate how a range of 'typical' Andean characteristics are in fact found among other high altitude living people and places, thus undermining *ayllu* claims to uniqueness. The critiques against '*ayllu* studies' continued into the 2000s. Ouweneel (2003) urged his readers never to attempt to understand that which is thought to be typically Andean, as separate from colonialism and globalisation. He also argued that the pre-colonial *ayllu* economy was more akin to a feudal system than anything else (2003:90) and that the practice of rotational leadership was created under pressure from the Spanish, rather than born from egalitarian principles (Ouweneel 2003:92). The attack on the 'obsession' with the *ayllu* was also levelled at NGOs who were thought to be romanticising Andean communities (e.g. Van Niekerk 2003:104-110). Van Niekerk accused NGOs working in the region at the time of being more concerned with defending ideologies of the past than effectively supporting indigenous people in their poverty in the present (2003: 110). In agreement with Starn, Van Niekerk strongly argues that the gap between the sociocultural approach that celebrates *lo andino* (Andeanism), and poverty studies that show the wide spread marginal living conditions of the rural poor in the Andes, is unacceptably wide (2003: 114). While Starn has himself since re-formulated his stance, in response to critique that he had underplayed the nuances of the work he was criticising as well as dismissed the importance of appreciating certain Andean continuities when analysing the Peruvian civil war (see Mayer 1991), and making it less accusatory, his point remains, to a degree, valid, and the *ayllu* was speedily de-constructed in the 1990s. During this time research themes such as education, migration, globalisation, NGOs and state bureaucracies flourished (e.g. Van Cott 2002, Seider 2002, Stavenhagen 2002, Yashar 1998, 1999, 2005).

Emerging at the other end of this body of work are new theorisations of what Andean-ness, '*lo Andino*,' or the *ayllu* is. Salman and Zoomers argue that Andean-ness should not be described as a localized mode of life (i.e. rooted in a highland area) or severed from links with national frameworks (Karsten Paerregaard 2003), instead the locus for Andean-ness is not place, but the Andean people (Salman & Zoomers 2003:7). Their volume tends toward a deconstruction of Andean-ness to the point of its complete obliteration:

In that case, culture is never an entity to be contemplated in the singular or univocal; culture is always a complex, multi-layered dimension, above, in, and under us. And in that case, Andean-ness cannot be studied 'in itself,' as something 'distinct.' It is accessible only through its relations, as well as only through concrete people's lives and actions.

Salman & van Dam 2003: 32

Andeanism and Indigenismo

As Weismantel (2006) has described, the relationship between local and foreign academics also plays a part in the story of how the *ayllu* is written about, and yields an interesting insight into how inter-scholarly relationships affect what is sent off for publication. Just as western scholars moved away from the *ayllu*, indigenous scholars (e.g. Choque and Mamani 2001; Macas 2000; Rivera Cusicanqui 1990) began to write about the *ayllu* and claimed it as a core of the Andean cultural world, often citing earlier anthropological sources from which western scholars had now distanced themselves. But, understandably, foreign scholars have been unwilling directly to battle indigenous scholars for fear of invoking colonialist parallels. However, Weismantel (2006) argues, the theoretical approaches of indigenous and non-indigenous scholars are not as opposed as they may appear.

Firstly, the majority of indigenous scholarship does not describe historical continuity but instead discontinuity and oppression and the *ayllu* is used to invoke what it could be, rather than what it was – they are in effect arguing against violent extirpation and forced assimilation. The work to reconstitute the *ayllu* in the early 1980s was seen as a way of being able to mitigate the effects of the catastrophic economic and social crisis at the time. For many

local scholars today the *ayllu* is a concept through which a future, alternative and de-colonised modernity can be imagined (e.g. Choque and Mamani 2001; Macas 2000; Rengifo Vasquez 1998; Rivera Cusicanqui 1990; Taller de Historia Oral Andina 1995) and, unlike Salman and Zoomers, they particularly draw on a territorially bound version of the *ayllu* (Stephenson 2002: 107). Centres of subaltern studies such as THOA, Mink'a, Qhantati, Chitakolla and Centro Pisisuyu (Stephenson 2002), all work toward a de-colonisation of the Andes, combining revisionist historiography, territorial claims and collective political action. The *ayllu* is vital to 'building different terms of reference to those of western modernity and all that that entails' (Macas 2000:1). The instrumentally constructed *ayllu* does not rely on whether the descriptions of it are accurate but on whether it has the power to make itself so (Weismantel 2006). 'Strategic essentialism' (Spivak 1987) is sometimes necessary to enable a broad movement with defined goals which has the power to dismantle the present and construct an alternative future.

Secondly, indigenous scholars are not simply referencing 'outdated' publications on the *ayllu* written by western scholars. Instead, they draw on the century old intellectual movement of *indigenismo* with its strong Marxist influences (e.g. Arguedas 1956; Mariátegui 1928; Valcárcel 1927; Castro Pozo 1928, 1936). The *indigenismo* movement at the beginning of the 21st century sought to valorise indigenous culture and was in part about the emerging Latin American elite of the early 20th century becoming comfortable with their own mixed heritage, and while these scholars arguably valued folklore rather than contemporary indigenous culture (Canessa 2006b: 244), they also created a domestic body of work. Andeanism is not then, as Starn argued, the equivalent of Orientalism. For while it essentialises and glorifies, it is, in part, a product of national scholars attempting to make a space for themselves in highly oppressive and racist societies, and drawing on earlier indigenous scholarship to do this.

It is obvious that the *ayllu* has varied over time and across space, that it is flexible, and that much of what has been described as core characteristics are

in fact mutable and other than how they might appear. The *ayllu* does not spring from a logical extension of a particular system of exchange of goods and labour based on an ecological reality, nor is it a universally egalitarian institution. Instead, land management and authority structures are conscious and unconscious political and historical creations which vary between *ayllus*, across the Andes, and through time. Power and hierarchy characterise the internal functioning of the *ayllu* far more than popular perceptions and academic work, which traditionally focus on dual ecology, complementarity, and *yanantin*, have admitted. Yet, unlike Salman and Zoomers I argue that the *ayllu* is an identifiable lived-in place, rooted in land, and a delineable category for analysis.

Labour and the Andes

The meanings of work, boundaries between work and non-work, and the variety of definitions of what constitutes work, have been discussed in anthropology by numerous authors, in particular within the field of economic anthropology (see Cohen 1979; Firth 1979; Geertz 1979; Godelier 1986 1980; Kaplan 2000; Moore 1988, 1992; Murray Li 1998; Sahlins 1972; Schwimmer 1979; Searle-Chatterjee 1979; Wallman 1979; Weber 1976 [1905]). Studies on the separation of domestic tasks from the sphere of work have been dealt with by Godelier (1986), Moore (1988, 1992), Murray-Li (1998) and Kaplan (2000).²⁷ The emergence of the hegemonic western idea of 'work,' as a concept separated from any specific form but always bound up in an economy governed by instrumental and practical action, has also been much debated and investigated in the wider literature (see Godelier 1980; Gudeman 1986).²⁸ Throughout these debates the understanding of work is analysed in reference to the economy. As part of a wider exploration into broader and varying ways of defining and understanding work in

²⁷ The role of the industrial revolution in the separation of a domestic sphere from a 'work' sphere have been debated by Carrier (1992) and Thompson (1967) on the one side and Parry (1999), on the other.

²⁸ For further reading on the connection between work and economy see the formalist/substantivist debate that took place in economic anthropology in the 1960s: Burling 1962; Cancian 1966; Cohen 1967; Cook 1966; Dalton 1961; Kaplan 1968; LeClair 1962; Polanyi 1968.

anthropology of labour (see Fajans 1997; Munn 1986; Myers 1986; Sangren 1987, 2000; Turner 1979, 1984, 1995), Harris (2007) posits that it would be fruitful to understand the meaning of work in terms of how it is valued in its specific cultural context. This implies searching for value that is not necessarily conferred according to productivity, maximization or even distribution. Harris' own investigation into the value of labour in a particular cultural context is set in the Bolivian Andes and therefore provides an ideal framing for the argument of this thesis. While Harris began a discussion of the value of labour in the Andes, much remains to be said regarding the specific content of the local concepts of Andean labour. This is where I locate this thesis, as an investigation into the local value of labour, *llank'ay*. This section will situate the argument of the thesis within the regional Andean debates on work and demonstrate that, while there has been attention paid to agricultural work, the analysis of this literature has been limited. The literature has tended to assume that increased sociality is both the major outcome and benefit of *ayllu* work practices. In contrast, I argue that the value of work is instead perceived to be located in its power as a transformative process. A process which turns dry land into productive fields, and non-humans into humans. I also suggest that this process is valued because the very concept of transformation is something which is culturally evaluated as positive.

The positive value of work is noted throughout the Andean literature and is mainly discussed in terms of labour exchange, how obligation and reciprocity create communality that is valued. However, many of the authors discussing the most common modes of labour exchange highlight the fact that they do not necessarily create communality but may instead be experienced as oppressive, and work to reinforce inequalities and hierarchies (e.g. Harris 1986, 2000; Gose 1994). Despite this widely acknowledged aspect of Andean labour practices, the perception that the value of work lies in its ability to create communality through exchange, firmly remains. Harris (2007) aims to solve this apparent contradiction by pushing the analysis a step further, suggesting that obligation is not necessarily experienced as oppressive.

Rather, obligation and even forced labour is valued as it too creates relationships and thus strengthens sociality. I argue that another way of reconciling the positive value of work with the sometimes oppressive communal work practices and unequal exchange, is to locate the value of work in a different place - specifically in its power to transform. My analysis therefore differs from much of the regional work on labour in two ways – one, it is not focused on the organisations on labour (i.e. the various forms of labour exchange), but rather on the content of the work itself, and, two, it does not assume that the value of labour lies mainly in increased sociality but, instead, in the transformative power of labour in terms of the productivity of the land and the individual person.

As mentioned, communal labour exchange has been a key area of research within the topic of rural Andean labour. In Bolivian *ayllus* there are four main modes of labour exchange that are generally characterised as communal, but exact norms and rules attached to each vary between *ayllus*. The four are *aynuqa*, *ayni*, *chuqhu* and *mink'a*. *Aynuqa* is slightly different from the other three as it is strictly speaking not an exchange of labour but rather a system of communal usufruct of land; communal fields are here divided into strips corresponding to household needs. Every household works its own strips but in unison with the whole village. As everyone works together, side by side, there is a great deal of exchange of advice, assistance, food and labour of animals involved in *aynuqa*, despite there being no official exchange of labour.

The character of *ayni* and the exact terms of exchange involved vary across the Andes. In P'iya Qayma, *ayni* is a loose form of exchange between individuals or families. Reciprocity is often delayed in P'iya Qayma and is not necessarily practised according to a principle of like-for-like (i.e. labour might be exchanged for goods or the usufruct of a bull), but it is considered to be an exchange of things that are equal and which can occur between equals. To enter into *ayni*, neither of the parties need be in a position of wealth and the borrower is, in theory, not burdened with a lifetime of debt. However,

extended periods of indebtedness were common in situations when a large favour/assistance/product had been bestowed by one party and had to be exchanged for many smaller favours/tasks/products over a period of several months. Harris, on the other hand, describes how *ayni* amongst the Laymi denoted a far more regulated form of exchange that was based on like-for-like and studiously avoided a build-up of debt (Harris 2000:117).

Chuqhu and *mink'a* are similar in that they are the exchange of many peoples' labour assisting one household in return for large amounts of food and drink provided by that household. But whilst *chuqhu* is generally about agricultural work, *mink'a* can include a wide range of jobs, such as assisting in the building of a family's house. The word *mink'a* has also taken on the meaning of general wage labour in some areas (Harris 2000; Mayer 1974; Sanchez 1982). *Chuqhu* is regularly practised in Kirkiyawí, within villages and between them, but *mink'a* was, as far as I was made aware, not practised in the area.

These forms of labour exchange and *ayni* in particular have been proffered by many scholars as crucial to what is special about Andean labour (see Allen 1986, 1988, 1997; Earls and Silverblatt 1976; Gose 1994; Harris 1986, 2000; Mayer 1974; Sallnow 1987, 1989; Sanchez 1982; Urton 1981; Valderrama and Escalante 1988). They argue that it is the collective and cooperative labour practices that distinguish *runa* from non-*runa* (*q'ara*), indigenous from non-indigenous. *Ayni* has been referred to as the 'ethos' of indigenous Andean culture (Núñez del Prado 1972) and Allen describes *ayni* as the basic give-and-take that governs the universal circulation of vitality (1997:76). Allen argues that through *ayni*, humans maintain reciprocal relationships with each other, their animals, houses, fields, the earth and sacred places in the landscape (1997:76).

These labour exchanges may appear to work to create an egalitarian society, but both Harris (1986, 2000) and Gose (1994) have noted that they can in fact act to create differentiation and class. Not all inhabitants of a village will

have the resources to host a *chuqhu* or *mink'a*, and those who can afford to call on extra labour are able to utilise more fields and are therefore in a position where accumulation becomes possible. The host of a *chuqhu* or *mink'a* is also freed up to engage in urban-based wage labour, as the harvesting of all fields which might take one household a month to complete can be done in one day of *chuqhu*. In addition, the very act of the host feeding the workers creates a hierarchical relationship and, as noted by Gose in the Andes, can be an expression of power and proprietorship (1994: 11). Even *ayni*, the apparently most equal of exchanges can, as happens in P'iya Qayma, create indebtedness which extends for significant periods of time.

The important point here is that the communal work traditions that do exist are not automatically inclusive, neither in practice nor in the ideal. Instead, at times they are utilitarian exchanges, and during other moments they have more in common with wage labour, and, as the practice of *chuqhu* illustrates, they may even exacerbate rather than moderate economic divides. In addition, all these practices are negotiated through the particular ties and friendships between families and individuals, as well as being contingent on historicised power relations and the power of the land, as the story of the *oca* theft in Chapter 4 will illustrate.²⁹ It is clear that communal labour is not an unequivocal creator of communality, rather it is also infused with hierarchy and power and sits within structures which have been created and re-created over centuries. This is not to say that communality does not exist or is not crucial to *ayllu* life. But the puzzle is: if *aynuqa*, *ayni*, *chuqhu* and *mink'a* are not inherently or automatically communal, how can they be the main basis for the positive evaluation of work? Before addressing this question further I will explore some of the other ways work has been analysed in the Andes.

In addition to the value of labour exchange in terms of *ayllu*/indigenous sociality, other regional work on labour has looked less at communality and more at the creation of class. For instance, the writings of Alberti & Mayer

²⁹ *Oca* is a tuber not dissimilar to potatoes, slightly sweeter and with longer and thinner shape, it is sometimes grown in the virgin fields as an alternative to potato in order to provide variation.

(1974), Mayer (2002), Gose (1994) and Urton (1981) have all offered great ethnography on agricultural labour, aspects of which has impacted on the focus and shape of this thesis. But their analysis tends to the directions more commonly associated with labour studies, such as the creation of class or household economies, and so their focus differs from the one I am pursuing in this thesis. In emphasising the creation of class rather than communality, this body of work again evidences the varied outcomes of labour practices.

Another body of literature that has influenced the direction of this thesis is one that emphasises the materiality of agricultural life and the subsistence farmer's closeness to the land (e.g. Allen 1988, 1997; Orlove 1998; Sillar 1996). In my analysis of the value of *llank'ay* I also engage with the materiality of work and the importance of engagement with land and earth, both sacred and vernacular soil. Building on these authors' emphasis of this materiality, and bringing in Ingold's notions of 'dwelling' and 'taskscape' (2000), I also ask why material engagement is valued - why, as Orlove (1998) argues, walking barefoot on the land matters. Orlove emphasises that the closeness to the earth matters in terms of ethnic identity, that walking barefoot, being immersed in the earth, both creates and marks social difference. Orlove's analysis presents the substance of the earth as racialised in the same way that the perceptions of human bodily substances are associated with notions of race. Allen (1998), on the other hand joins the large group of scholars discussed previously whose final analysis is centred on relationships. For her, the materiality of agricultural labour is crucial to understanding the deep connection and reciprocal relationship between people and the land. This thesis examines the activity that takes place in the contexts of these substances and the various conceptions of what these substances mean. While Orlove beautifully describes the links between people and land and the bearing of this on ethnic identity and notions of race, he does not explain the rural emic perspective of why these links are understood as crucial to identity. As I will detail in the next section, 'Ethnicity, class, indigeneity and *runa-hood*,' I aim to understand this very question –

what it is about agricultural work that creates *runakuna*.³⁰

Work and value

Returning to Harris' (2007) search for value I will now develop the main question of this thesis: the nature and value of *llank'ay*. Harris argues that in the Andean *ayllu*, work is cosmologically bound up in life, while Western values regard manual labour as a form of servitude bracketed off from meaningful and pleasurable life. She suggests that the prevalence of slavery in the ancient world has infected Western ideas about work and personhood more profoundly than is recognised, and in some senses work is seen as the antithesis of freedom. In contrast to this, Harris describes how Bolivian highland farmers believe that the land and all its riches were bestowed by God and that working this land is a joy. The value of work, Harris argues, is generally measured in terms of what the work produces, but in the Andes work itself is an expression of value.

In the Andean case, it can be argued that work is sacralised, seen as an obligation, both because it is part of a continuous mutual nurturance between humans and deities and because rights to land are articulated through collective work. (Harris 2007: 148)

As Harris' writing points out, the term 'work' encapsulates many different types of activities, but they are often rendered conceptually similar as they become defined by their necessity for survival, thus obscuring the specific experiences created by different types of work. During her fieldwork with the Aymara-speaking Laymi, Harris discovered that there was no one word in use that corresponded to the word work. The Spanish word *trabajo*, which does translate as 'to work,' was employed only in reference to ploughing. Following her line of analysis, this thesis explores the concepts of work in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí. Similar to Harris' experience, I too recognised that it was

³⁰ Closeness to the land and ideas of rural well-being, virtue and health, has also been highlighted in recent research as crucial to a sense of humanity and fulfilment in the Andean context (Sax 2011; Calestani 2009). These topics are brought up in Chapters 5 and 7 and are important within the larger picture of what living a subsistence farming life in an *ayllu* means.

impossible to extricate work activities from general life. Most parts of life in Kirkiyawí demanded some form of engagement with the surrounding land and physical effort. In the course of the day work never finished, or alternatively, work never started. *Trabajo* is rarely used to refer to any activities taking place in the village; instead it generally denotes work undertaken in exchange for money in urban settings. The word that does re-occur, and is used to describe several activities within the *ayllu*, is the Quechua word *llank'ay* (to transform the land).

Found in dictionaries today under both *llank'ay* and *llamk'ay*, it is often translated as simply *trabajo* (work). However, taking my cue from people in Kirkiyawí I believe that a correct translation of *llank'ay*, in a rural setting at least, demands more specificity and is crucially always in reference to the land. In *Diccionario Agro Alimentario* (Carrasco and Montoya 1996), *llank'ay* is defined as *labrar la tierra: hacer producir la tierra* (to work/plough/cultivate the land, to make the earth produce) (59). In *Diccionario Bilingüe* (Centro Cultural Jayma 1997) *llamk'ay* is given as *laborar, labrar, trabajar, roturar terreno, preparar hazas, barbechar un terreno nuevo* (to till, to plough, to work, to break up, to plough earth, to prepare fields, to bring a field out of fallow) (124). Gonzalez Holguín (1989[1608]) translates *trabajo* as *llamccay* (209/682), but also gives the Quechua *llamcani* as *tocar palpar* (to touch, feel), suggesting a strong sensory dimension. His reference to the land in the context of this word incorporates the word *chacra* (field): *chacra llamccanacak. La tierra por labrar* (209). He also includes a suggestive links with the idea of the transformation of earth/land in the word *llanka. Greda, o tierra pegajosa, o barro de hazer ollas* (sticky clay to make pots). In reference to the direction of many of these definitions, but more importantly based on inhabitants own use and explanation of the word, I translate *llank'ay* as 'to transform the land.' *Llank'ay* is what people do when they plough, sow, weave, herd, and when they transform and store food. As a category, the activities undertaken to feed, clothe and make shelter are not defined in terms of the necessity to keep people alive, as work might be, but rather by their specific engagement

with the land around them and their power to transform that land.

In line with Graeber's argument (2001), I contend that the value of work lies not simply in its exchange value but is instead bound up larger societal values. In this instance they include the meaning of personhood, Christianity and understandings of animate landscapes. *Llank'ay* also connects to a larger Andean theme – the process of transformation. Sillar (1996) urges us to pay attention to techniques of transformation, arguing that they are ideological and cultural. Following his line of enquiry I also suggest that the very notion of transformation is evaluated culturally, and in the Andes it is seen as crucial to being in the world. The focus on transformation spans several different areas of Latin American life and scholarship – from Amazonian alterity and shamans (Descola 2005, 1996, 1992; Viveros the Castro 2005, 1998, 1992), *mestizaje* (De la Cadena 2005; Weismantel 2001, 2005) and personhood (Abercrombie 1998, 1991; Canessa 2012, 1998). Whilst not engaging in a longer discussion of the role of transformation in the Andes and wider Latin America, I suggest that the emphasis placed on processes of transformation in this part of the world supports my overall argument that what is valued about *llank'ay* is not mainly its ability to create communality and relationships but rather how it is crucial to the transformation of the earth into productive fields and non-people into *runakuna* with the concomitant skills, knowledges, bodies, experiences, moralities and ability to attain salvation.

Ethnicity, race, class, indigeneity and runahood

One transformative power of *llank'ay* is the ability to create *runakuna*. This section discusses the meaning of *runahood* and its relationship to other Andean identities rooted in notions of ethnicity, race, class and indigeneity.

In Bolivia social difference is created and contested on a national level through idioms of class and ethnicity. From this perspective being indian, or being indigenous, is essentially defined by skin colour and long-term poverty. However, as many authors have pointed out, in addition to this national

perspective, 'indigenous groups' also have an emic perspective on how they understand and create social difference. This emic perspective is not rooted in race or descent or in class and oppression but instead in a processual understanding of what it is to be human, to be *runa* (Q) or *jaqi* (A).

Throughout this thesis I interrogate the local concept of *runahood* (personhood) and its relationship to *llank'ay* in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí. I describe that *runahood* is crucial to how people evaluate themselves and others and to the choices they make regarding how they live their lives. Whilst *runahood* remains my focus, *runa* and *q'ara* are not the only identities that matter and impact on peoples' lives. National identities and categories expressed through the language of ethnicity, race, class and indigeneity which permeate Bolivian national society, both in terms of consciousness and the social, political and economic structures that simultaneously enable and limit peoples' lives and possibilities. So, how people are categorised outside of the *ayllu*, in a national context, is different from how they are categorised within the *ayllu*. The various identities work on different registers: 1) ethnicity or race is rooted in essentialist ideas of blood and genes; 2) class is about education, economic productivity and inherited wealth; 3) indigeneity is about a way of life, alongside blood and descent; 4) *runa-hood* is about sustained practice and substance. The first is perceived as immutable, the second and third admit some flexibility, while the fourth is a concept which is fundamentally about transformation and which can only be attained through practice. In order to understand the context of being *runa* I will begin by setting the 'identity scene' through a brief discussion on class, race and indigeneity.

Fluidity and rigidity

Bolivian society is characterised by stratified, rigid and unequal structures where the divides are often expressed in terms of race and – simultaneously – the fluidity and relationality of these categories (de la Cadena 1995; Orlove 1998; Seligmann 1989). As the underlying premise of race is false, distinctions are imaginary and can never be upheld, people can move from

one ethnic category to another. Yet, because the central concept is one of absolutism, essentialist ideology informs peoples' behaviour and attitudes to each other.

In Bolivia identity in national discourse is shaped around the consequences of colonisation. The division and consolidation of people in terms of race or class has been deliberate and policy led (Klein 2003; Larson 1988; Harris 1995a). The 'two republics' of landowners and citizens and tribute-paying indians of the colonial regime, and the later two-tier class system built along racial lines, were impossible to control from the start (Harris 1995a) and to this day it is generally accepted by scholars that the distinction between indians and non-indians is historically contingent, shifting and constantly constructed (Harris & Larson 1995). Yet, because the borders of identity have been of utmost importance to the privileged classes, they have made efforts to guard them fiercely, something which has translated into real-life limits and discrimination.

How scholars should write about race, ethnicity and indigeneity in Latin America is the concern of much debate. Rasnake (1988), Mitchell (1991) and Gose (1994) all came to the conclusion that there was no racism in their respective field sites. Although they note how locals employed language of race to describe society and legitimise inequalities, they argue that the absence of biological basis for these local prejudices precludes the anthropologist from describing the inequalities present as racial. Weismantel (2001), writing against these authors, argues that race is always a fiction but in South America it is also a social fact, as Wade put it: there are no races before racism (1993b). Along with class and gender, race structures an enduring unequal society, and has hindered social and economic development (Weismantel 2001). Race is employed to eradicate the nuances of realities as it constantly refers to the racial binaries created in the colonial division and creation of two republics (Larson 2004), 'race operates as a vicious binary that discriminates superiors from inferiors' (Weismantel 2001: xxxi). To the extent that people perceive race, and racial binaries, to be

a reality, it can be seen as a legitimate analytical category.

The projects undertaken to move between these 'ethnic' categories has received much scholarly attention. On the one hand, ethnic divides are clear: nobody in Bolivia would mistake a wealthy white urbanite for a rural indian subsistence farmer. On the other hand, *mestizaje* and *blancamiento*, the transformations of ethnic identities, are real and openly acknowledged processes that characterise Bolivian society. An indian can become a *cholo* or *mestizo* – ethnicity is bound up in occupation, clothing, language and other cultural attributes and *blancamiento* involves the building of a different body, one that looks, sounds, feels, and even smells white (Weismantel 1998: 135).

The process of *mestizaje* is itself also marked by both rigidity and fluidity. Wade argues that *mestizaje* must be understood as a lived process, not just a nation building ideology (2005). Key to Wade's analysis of *mestizaje* is the assumption that *mestizaje* does not have a single meaning; instead it includes tensions of sameness and difference, inclusion and exclusion. It is not one homogenous project with predictable processes and outcomes that can be explained in terms of dualisms such as elite versus subaltern (Wade 2005). The very concept and popular imagination of it as something which collapses categories or even acts as a liberating and radical force, simultaneously re-enforces the very existence of distinct cultural and biological groups. For this reason De la Cadena refers to the category of *mestizo* as a conceptual hybrid (2005).

What is real about *mestizaje* and ethnicity is peoples' perceptions of what these things are and mean. Of course, as mentioned, these are heterogeneous perceptions. The extent to which ethnicity and identity is perceived as mutable and tied to practice rather than race varies: while whites and *mestizos* still invoke concepts of genetics, debates surrounding Quechua and Aymara identities tend to foreground practice. The projects of *mestizaje* are often undertaken by the latter group, who perceive their own personhood as constructed through practice. Their very real perception of *mestizaje* and

their own ethnicity, informs the shape and character of *mestizaje*. As such, their underlying understanding of identity as something mutable, surely affects the shape of these processes of transformation and the ability of the *runakuna* (*jaqi* in Aymara) to find the fluidity. The fluidity is of course not equally fluid for all. One main differentiator is gender (Canessa 2012, de la Cadena 1995; Seligmann 1989; Weismantel 1998). Men are able to move more freely between the identities than women, this is both a result of differentiated access to the resources and knowledge needed for transformation, and also concerns the extent of transformation needed to take place. Women are seen as more indian than men and therefore have to engage in a more radical transformation. Weismantel reminds us that sex, race and class still matter – the access to these fluid spaces is not equally distributed amongst different groups in society, and social mobility often comes at a heavy cost (Weismantel 2005:184).

Within this context of heterogeneous *mestizaje*, of obvious fluidity but also undeniable rigidity, there exist different registers of identity and labels which are employed to emphasise different things. For instance, Andean indigeneity and indian ethnicity may be equated with an emic definition of personhood by, for instance, anthropologists, the tools for identification used amongst the wider Bolivian population differ. In Kirkiyawí, the term indigenous is rarely used in self-reference, instead indigenous denotes low-land groups who want to emphasise a specific type of indigenous identity as recognised by, for instance, the United Nations or the new Bolivian constitution. In the highlands people refer to themselves as *originarios* when they want invoke a similar identity. For people in P'íya Qayma indigeneity means something different than being *runa*, it is a more politicised category which has recently been expanded by Evo Morales as part of his aim to create a broad base of political support for himself and his party (see Albro on indigenous pluralism 2005, 2006; Albo 2003, 1995, and Burman 2010, on indigenous activism). Statistics support that the Bolivian highland population do not equate indigeneity with rural *runahood*. According to the 2012 census, 2.8 million Bolivians over the age of 15 self-define as belonging to one of the indigenous

groups (including afro Bolivians) this is 40% of the current adult population – far more than live *ayllu* lives and would fulfil the tighter preconditions for *runahood*. A majority of the Bolivians who were designated as indigenous in the 2001 census were urban (INE 2003 Canessa 2012: 69), suggesting that *runahood* and indigeneity do not neatly coincide. What then is *runahood*?

Runahood

One way of defining highland Bolivian indigeneity is according to an emic understanding of social difference which is based around the categories of *runa/jaqi* and *qara*. *Runahood* is processual, about action and performance, its logic does not draw on notions of blood, descent or class – instead it is about a way of living one's life. People are not born *runa*, but if they are born in an *ayllu* they are born into the ideal context within which they can become *runa*.

The notion that one is not born a complete person and that personhood can only be achieved through certain prescribed activities is fairly prevalent in the Americas (see Abercrombie 1998; Canessa 1998; Harris 2000; Reeve 1988a). The usage of the words *runa* (Q)/*jaqi* (A) and *q'ara* (Q&A) have been noted by several authors (in Aymara by Abercrombie 1998; Bigenho 2001; Canessa 1998, 2006b, 2012; Harris 2007; Rasnake 1988; and noted in Quechua by Allen 1994; Gose 1994; Isbell 1978; Van Vleet 2008; Weismantel 2001). According to the emic understanding to *runahood*, people are thought to proceed from a state of non-human infancy, through childhood, adolescence and adulthood where they gradually accumulate skills, knowledge and experiences and become sufficiently embedded in social networks to be *runa*. This process is the narrative pathway of life, *thaki* (Abercrombie 1998; McNeish 2000).³¹

³¹*Thaki* is an Aymara word but still in use in Kirkiyawí, a Quechua speaking *ayllu*. The presence of Aymara words in Quechua speaking areas are not uncommon as it was once the language of much of the highland region in what is now Bolivia and has remained the first language of many of the *ayllus* neighbouring Kirkiyawí.

In this thesis I argue that crucial to the process of becoming *runa* is doing *llank'ay*. The emphasis I place on particular aspects of *llank'ay* diverges from the most commonly argued reasons used for how people become *runa* and what the meaning of *runa* is. Firstly, much of the literature which discusses the process of becoming *runa* tends to privilege ritual and symbolic moments over everyday life in the development of a person's *runa-hood*.

In particular, becoming *runa* has been described as closely linked to participation in the cargo system (Goodale 2001; McNeish 2001; Rasnake 1988). Events such as the first haircut (*rutucha*), house building and marriage, along with responsibilities of *fiesta* sponsorship, or service fulfilled in posts of authority within the cargo system, and even death, are selected for special mention as the main events of the *thaki*. Similar to Harris' (1995b) criticism of the privileging of 'big events' in history, I suggest that there has been an over-emphasis on the 'big events' in life. Whilst these 'heightened' moments certainly play their part in the development of *runa-hood*, and the performative power of ritual creates more than what it marks, it is also still a marker, and more emphasis should be placed on everyday activities: when people hone the skills necessary to plough the land, herd their sheep or build the social relationships needed to marry someone or enter into relations of *compadrazgo*. Most of the process of maturing into a *runa* in P'iya Qayma occurs during the everyday work of the agricultural year. Due to the Baptist conversion, regular rituals have been scaled back in P'iya Qayma, and the participation in the cargo system is much less taxing. If these two factors were the main ways in which people become *runa*, then people in P'iya Qayma would struggle to create their humanity, and this is not the case.

Where performance and process is emphasised over specific moments in life, work has tended to be left out as an area of analysis. In the volume *Natives making nation, gender, indigeneity and the state in the Andes* edited by Andrew Canessa, the various chapters 'illustrate how identity is performative and is produced through clothing (Van Vleet), sexuality (Canessa), music (Bigenho), dance (Stephenson), and weaving (Zorn)' (Canessa: 2005: 22-23).

The volume demonstrates, among other things, that identity is often rooted in the body and bodily practices. Thus the focus is on identities created through long-term physical practice of a seemingly mundane kind. Our understanding of agricultural labour would certainly benefit from the type of analysis employed here, but unfortunately the topic is not included in the volume.

Secondly, the meaning of *runa* tends to be discussed in terms of a person's position within a web of social relationships. In a similar manner to how the value of work has been understood in terms of communality, so *runahood* has come to be defined by its embeddedness in social networks. For instance, Isbell (1978) has described the crucial place of reciprocal obligations in the development of *runahood* and Van Vleet (2005, 2008, 2011) has argued that social relationships, kinship, identity and belonging are all about networks.

In his discussion on indigenous identity, Canessa (1998) does include work as a crucial element of becoming *runa* (or *jaqi* in the case of his Aymara speaking informants). Canessa reports how, according to local cosmology in the Andean village of Pocobaya, there is a clear divide between those who are *jaq'i* and *q'ara*. Only those who live off the land and are positioned within the net of mutual social obligations and fulfil the expectations of the path of life can ever be considered *jaq'i*. Canessa describes the cases of two migrants, one of whom, Eustaquio, is no longer considered *jaq'i*, but is instead *q'ara*, and the other, Andrés, who has retained his *jaq'i* personhood. Canessa points to Andrés' continued engagement with land at key agricultural moments as the reason for his sustained *jaq'i* identity. Similar to the situation that Canessa describes, migrants from P'iya Qayma risk losing their *runahood* if they cease to practise agricultural labour, or more specifically *llank'ay*, as will be explored in Chapter 7. Canessa's analysis finally emphasises that the engagement in agricultural labour is not in itself what leads to *runahood*, rather it is the important part labour plays in establishing the network of relationships in the collectivity which create *runahood*. In this way, Canessa's ultimate point is in line with, for instance, Isbell and van Vleet's emphasis on

sociality.

Orlove, as discussed in the previous section on labour is clear that rural living and closeness to the land is a, if not the, key element of ethnic identity. This thesis is in agreement with his argument that the material context is crucial to identity, another big factor is the specific work undertaken in this agricultural context and as I will go on to show in Chapter 7, *llank'ay* is such a fundamental aspect of *runahood* that it can stretch the boundaries of the rural limits.

Similar to Canessa, I argue that *llank'ay* is crucial to the development of *runahood*/indigeneity but not necessarily because of the role it plays in terms of communality, rather, because it has the power to transform people by giving them bodies, knowledges and skills, by allowing them to transform the earth into productive fields, something that is akin to fulfilling ones fate and purpose in life and which ultimately leads to salvation.

Fieldwork in the Andes

As anthropologists, I thought to myself, might we not learn more about the material composition of the inhabited world by engaging quite directly with the stuff we want to understand: by sawing logs, building a wall, knapping a stone or rowing a boat? Could not such engagement – working practically *with* materials – offer a more powerful procedure of discovery than an approach bent on the abstract analysis *of* things already made?

Ingold (2007a: 2–3).

At the heart of this thesis is agricultural activity. From this topic springs several themes – concepts of labour, *ayllu* personhood and the agency of land. My experience of fieldwork was similarly structured. Coming new to the place and to such an isolated and completely engulfing fieldwork set-up as I did, it was agricultural labour that provided me with the doorway into deeper understanding, friendships and ideas. In the initial period of my fieldwork I inevitably engaged in a lot of observation and this generated some worthwhile questions and ideas. However, it was not until I allowed participation to become my default mode of doing research, and my bodily

practice changed accordingly, that I felt confident in my thoughts and that my questions delivered answers I could understand. The experience of working land is clearly a very physical one and so its effect on the person and life is hard to verbalise in its completeness. If I was to glean even the faintest insight into the reality of this experience I needed to engage in phenomenological fieldwork which entailed participating in physical activities; learning how my body and a plough work together, experiencing the satisfaction of chewing coca after a long walk home with herds of animals, feeling the disappointment and glimpsing the despair that overwhelmed me when in the autumn, with dry, cracked hands and tired arms, I unearthed row after row of potatoes, planted with such hope and effort in spring, rotted and now ruined by the rain.

A phenomenological approach to anthropological methodology, or an ethnomethodological perspective (Garfinkel 1967), entails a physical engagement with your field-site and, building on the phenomenological strand founded by Edmund Husserl (1962, 1970), a focus on experience, everyday actions and language. Phenomenology has had both a methodological impact on anthropology, and a theoretical one (Desjarlais and Throop 2011). I would argue that for anthropology, the methodological impact, 'doing anthropology' (Bourdieu 1990), is the more important. Unlike the theory of phenomenology, which has been critiqued by Bourdieu (1990: 26), Geertz (1973: 12), Levi-Strauss (1973: 58) and others for dealing only with the individual and epiphenomenal rather than political and socioeconomic determinants in life, a phenomenological approach to fieldwork methodology encourages a grounded and concrete engagement with people, places and topics, it is an empirical approach (Jackson 1996).³² The ethnographer's opportunity to taste, smell and feel her fieldsite, and open all her senses to the worlds of others, is anthropology's great strength

³² However, many proponents of phenomenology as a theory of the world aim to include socio-economic contexts as part of the theory. For instance, Alfred Schutz' work, the structures of the life-world, can give us a phenomenology of social life, and recognise and account for agency, intentionality and praxis (Jackson 1996:20). Jackson (1996) argues that phenomenology and radical empiricism are not necessarily merely philosophies of the subject, but rather of inter subjectivity.

(Stoller 1989: 130). And in the case of this research it ultimately led to the focus on the centrality of agricultural labour.

Upon arriving in Bolivia in October 2007, I aimed to find a small subsistence farming highland village for my field site. I had narrowed the area down to the south-west areas of Cochabamba department, and specifically the province of Bolívar which was relatively understudied by anthropologists compared to the neighbouring areas in northern Potosí and where the strong presence of the unions had resulted in a particular relationship between indigenous identity and peasant identity. Bolivia is a large country with a small population. The vast expanses of mountainous terrain in the highlands, only occasionally dotted by little villages and hamlets, can create a sense that the place is almost uninhabited. The space overwhelmed me and I had no idea how I would actually find my way to one of these small villages and then also find a home.

Initially, I moved to the city of Cochabamba where I enrolled in Quechua classes. Very fortunately my Quechua teacher happened to know the address of the Bolívar municipal office in Cochabamba. I had searched for this information myself but to no avail. The following day I boarded one of the many *colectivos* (public transport mini buses) travelling up Blanco Galindo, the wide road between Cochabamba and the nearby town of Quillacollo, getting off at *kilómetro dos* (second kilometre).³³ I found a half-completed brick building which housed the Cochabamba office of the Bolívar municipality. From the moment I introduced myself to the staff of the office that day, I had no further difficulties finding a field site, being included in events or meeting new people. Although the process was still very slow, the fact that I was offered every assistance gave it a comforting reliability. The employees of the municipal office and the then *alcalde* (elected municipal mayor) met me with welcome enthusiasm and a week later, in their company, I travelled to Bolívar for the first time. In Bolívar they gave me a

³³ The areas between Cochabamba and Quillacollo which sit alongside Blanco Galindo are designated by the number of kilometers away they are from Cochabamba

desk space in their office – bitterly cold at the time – helped me find room and board, and introduced me to everyone and anyone.

I could have stayed in Bolívar; I came to know its inhabitants and the workings of the village well. But as I knew I wanted my project to be oriented around land – although at the time I was more interested in land management and property relations rather than agricultural labour – I believed I needed to undertake my fieldwork in one of the smaller villages, where subsistence farming was dominant. It took me eight months to finally move to the village of P'iya Qayma. During these months in Bolívar I joined the rhythm of the small regional capital. I spent many mornings and evenings with my landlady, Doña Sofia, and her family. During the day I would visit the smaller villages in the area. With the help of the employees of INDICEP and the engineers and technicians working for the municipal office, I managed to see most of Bolívar province and its many villages. I would hitch a ride on the back of one of their motorcycles and sit in on dozens of meetings between NGOs, the municipality, *ayllu* and union. The employees of the municipality, INDICEP and Doña Sofia, along with various professionals and friends in the provincial capital, proved invaluable sources of information and conversation which provided me with much contextual knowledge. This came in very useful both during later fieldwork and when writing this thesis.

Wilford, an engineer working for INDICEP, was running greenhouse projects at the primary schools in the *zona alta*, and after an initial visit to P'iya Qayma with the local doctor, I joined Wilford during the development of these projects and I became familiar with P'iya Qayma and the surrounding villages and its people. P'iya Qayma struck me as an ideal field-site for the type of work I wanted to undertake, a village with a livelihood wholly based on subsistence farming, separated by distance and lack of daily transport from the provincial capital and any other urban or semi-urban centres. The move was a drawn out process. Wilford was originally concerned about my welfare should I move to the small village, and as I was reliant on him or his colleagues to drive me, along with my gas canister, hot plate, straw mattress

and many blankets, to the village, I had to wait for them to be convinced by my reassurances. One Saturday morning we were finally meant to leave but when I arrived at their office they had already departed for the day, later they told me there would not have been any room in their car for me, and I patiently had to wait another two weeks before I finally made the journey and started my life in P'iya Qayma. It would be dishonest to deny here that to a large part my decision to move to P'iya Qayma was based on my encounters with the people of the village, their welcoming manner and openness which encouraged me that fieldwork there would be possible. Those promising signs proved prophetic.

I remained in P'iya Qayma for twelve months, from July 2008 to June 2009, following the work of a complete agricultural year. A handful of families and individuals in P'iya Qayma provided a majority of the ethnography for this thesis. In P'iya Qayma I soon found that interviews or anything that resembled them never solicited open discussion or in fact much discussion at all. Instead, listening, friendly conversation and participation became my main way of gathering information. I joined in with the herding, the ploughing, sowing and harvesting. I spun wool, washed children's clothes in the coldest of springs, ground *quinoa*, threshed *cañawa*, ate potatoes and *chuño*, smoked cigarettes and chewed coca leaves. My skin dried and cracked, my feet blistered and my back ached. I came to love the hot tea with plenty of sugar in the morning, my straw mattress at night, the endless views and most of all the company of the people of P'iya Qayma. Whilst I occasionally joined villagers on their travels to Oruro, and became familiar with its truck stops and markets where a majority of the trade which the villagers were involved in took part, I never spent any time in the migrant suburbs of the town or became intimate with a migrant's life in the town. I choose to remain focused on the village of P'iya Qayma as this was the locale with which I needed to familiarise myself in order to investigate labour and land.

My Quechua lessons had given me a fair knowledge of the language, but on arrival I found it hard to follow some conversations, and to my despair I soon

realised that many of the women in the village were in fact Aymara rather than Quechua speakers. Due to the proximity of the Aymara speaking *ayllus* of Potosí, many of the local men had married women from across the departmental border, who had come to settle in the village. Initially, this meant that I found it easier to communicate with men. Most of the women soon knew that my Aymara was near non-existent and therefore began speaking to me in Quechua, in which they were perfectly fluent. Despite this there were moments during my fieldwork when I found myself unable to follow a conversation between some of the women as they had reverted to their mother tongue of Aymara. In addition, the high altitude took its toll and I felt low in energy and cognitive skills – so the first few months in P'iya Qayma were in many ways exciting and wonderful but also frustrating and lonely and I often wondered if I would ever be able to do 'proper fieldwork.' But as my body adapted to the altitude, my stomach to the *chuño* and my ears to the Spanish/Quechua/Aymara mix, things improved. Although moments of loneliness and frustration re-occurred they became less frequent and I became busier.

Most people's names have not been changed. They were eager to be part of this book, and the information about them and their lives was not imparted to me in confidence or hidden from other members of the village. Some names have been changed however, as I did not have the possibility to gain their permission and my meeting with them was too fleeting for me to have time to explain my work and for them to make any informed decisions about anonymity. Members of larger organisations and those who are politically active have all retained their real names.

Throughout the thesis Quechua, Aymara and Spanish words are used, this is a reflection of life in P'iya Qayma. The words denoting *ayllu* divisions and authority figures draw on all three languages. Confusingly, there is a great variation in terms employed between various highland *ayllus*, and comparing the structures of Kirkiyawí with those described in the wider literature proved a more demanding task than anticipated. The words employed in

each locality depend on whether the area is Quechua or Aymara speaking, the extent of Spanish and urban influences, whether it was ever hacienda or *mita* land, and the area's engagement with the Inka empire. All these historical experiences will be elucidated in the following chapter on local and national history. Kirkiyawí is a Quechua speaking *ayllu* but it is full of Aymara place names and words, as demonstrated by the map in Chapter 3 (and at the back of the thesis). In this thesis, I employ the Quechua words *aransaya* and *urinsaya* to denote the two *ayllu* halves of Kirkiyawí, but *zona alta* and *zona baja* to mark the geographically higher and lower zones of the area. The terms *aransaya* and *urinsaya* are regularly employed by locals when discussing the *ayllu*, and locally in written usage. As regards terms denoting authorities, I employ *cacique*, (Sp), *kuraj tata* (Q), *jilanqo* (Q) and *mallku* (A) as these were the words used by all in Kirkiyawí.³⁴

In daily speech Quechua was peppered with Spanish words, and sometimes, often for my benefit, whole phrases and sentences were expressed in Spanish. Words and sentences included in this thesis appear in the language which they were originally spoken, with the exception of some longer passages which only appear in English.

My usage of the words *indian*, *indigenous* and *originario* requires some explanation. Following on from several Andeanists (cf Canessa 2012, 2005; Harris 1995c; Weismantel 2001) I employ the term *indian*. Despite the fact that it is a derogatory term which is both unspecific and homogenous, it is effective in referring to a large subaltern group which can be bracketed off as a collective due to shared marginality. When using the word *indian*, everyone

³⁴ In the literature, as well as in everyday talk, the word *kuraqkuna* is often used as a collective term for authority figures. Rasnake (1988) translates this as elders. *Kuraq* could be translated to mean big or great and *kuna* is a plural ending. The leader of the *ayllu* might be titled a *kuraka*, *cacique* (Spanish term for *kuraka*) or a *mallku*. *Corregidores* are another leading *ayllu* figure, they were colonial administrators and tax collectors, some *ayllus* have now created their own elected post of *corregidor*, now an indigenous leader whose main responsibility is to deal with the local and national government especially with regards to tax matters. The middle level authority figures are sometimes called *segunda mayores*, *alcaldes* (not to be confused with the municipal *alcalde* who is an elected local government figure) or *kuraj tatas*. *Jilanqo* or *jilaqatas* appears to be the most commonly used terms for the village representative.

in Bolivia has an instinctive sense of what the characteristics and history of this group are. In reality, of course, there is no clear delineation between who is indian and who is not. The word has been re-appropriated by the radical Aymara movement and is mobilised by them in a positive and empowering sense (Harris 1995c). For instance, the Aymara radical Felipe Quispe and his party MITKA (Movimiento Indio Túpac Katari) employ the term, arguing that it was as indians they were exploited and as indians they shall free themselves (Harris 1995c). Indigenous is a more politically correct term but is often used incorrectly to denote all non-Spanish people in Bolivia. It also adds a complicated twist on land claims, in a country where movement and migration throughout the centuries means that indigeneity is hard to prove, and indeed irrelevant to whether someone has a claim to a piece of land or not. In such a setting the act of defining some people as native becomes arbitrary (Harris 1995c). I use it to refer to movements and people who choose to employ the terms themselves. *Originario* has become a commonly used term when referring to the highland rural population, and indeed many people in Kirkiyawí self-labelled as *originarios*, while referring to low-land groups as indigenous. Throughout most of my thesis I refer to groups based on their residence, for example, the inhabitants of P'íya Qayma.

Thesis outline

Throughout the following chapters agricultural labour in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí will be discussed through themes of physical labour, landscape, personhood, land management, religion, local politics and migration. Each chapter will demonstrate how the prism of agricultural activity illuminates its specific topic and also in turn builds and elaborates on the meaning of the local concept of work, *llank'ay*.

Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 provides an historical context, detailing the local and national histories as well as global trends which are crucial to the understanding of the predicament of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí and its inhabitants today: in particular as regards their relationship with local and central government.

Chapter 3 is organised around the agricultural year and introduces the families of P'iya Qayma in tandem with the changing tasks they perform throughout the seasons. By detailing agricultural work in P'iya Qayma throughout the year I show how central it is to *ayllu* life. I map people's movement across the surface of the landscape, and their penetration into the soil, which creates an intimately known 'taskscape' (Ingold 2000). As the land shifts in shape and colour when it is worked, the bodies and skills and social relationship also develop. The landscape in P'iya Qayma is deeply temporal, both in terms of its transformation throughout the year and in terms of its ability to store the past in its material present. The taskscape of today is not a recent creation, but as the often-old names of places demonstrate it has been shaped and related to for generations. Landscape, personhood and social relations are all created and developed processually over time.

Chapter 4 explicitly elaborates the concept of *llank'ay*. The first half of the chapter concentrates on the relationship between *llank'ay* and *ayllu* personhood, *runa*-hood. *Runa*-hood is processual in nature and in this chapter I argue that agricultural activity is central to its development. One cannot become a full person without learning how to plough, sow, harvest, herd and transform land in all the ways necessary to render it productive. The second half of this chapter focuses on access to land and demonstrates the circular relationship between *runa*-hood and claims to land: sustained agricultural practice, in other words, well developed *runa*-hood, awards strong claims to land, but *runa*-hood can only be developed in the first place if access to land is secured. The chapter includes descriptions of land management and inheritance practices in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí. An ethnographic account of an *oca* theft as well as the resolution of the dispute demonstrates how *llank'ay* and rules of inheritance and land management interact in the articulations of claims to land. Through analysing the rationales and notions of legitimacy invoked by the actors of the dispute, we are able to observe the role and power of *llank'ay* within wider societal structures.

Chapter 5 explores the links between *llank'ay* and a vernacular yet animate landscape. The Baptist conversion has affected the relationship with the land. In P'iya Qayma the agricultural rituals aimed at chthonic deities, alcohol-fuelled Catholic festivals and idol worship – all seen to be crucial to communication between people and land – are no longer present. However, the sudden death of a villager exposes that the agency of the land has remained and is powerful enough to take a man's life by eating his heart. The landscape is potent with several types of agency, some of which fit well with a Baptist framework, but other aspects are more difficult to incorporate into the Protestant world view, yet they remain. I argue that the sustained powers of the landscape are intimately connected to continuous practice of *llank'ay*, transformation of land. While Chapter 4 demonstrated how *llank'ay* has the creative power to create full human beings, this chapter illustrates its ability to sustain agentive land.

Chapter 6 continues the exploration of the local concept of *llank'ay*, now examining how it can be used to understand activities which are not strictly agricultural ones and comparing it with work considered to be '*trabajo*' (Sp) (work), in order to fully grasp the value and defining meaning of *llank'ay*. This is done through an exploration of the relationships between the various organisations present in the locality and the work undertaken by villagers to engage with them. In *ayllu* Kirkiyawí people are simultaneously members of the union and the *ayllu* and this is unproblematic. In day-to-day life few distinctions are made between *ayllu* leaders and union leaders and often the two organisations are conflated. I argue that this reality can in part be explained by the fact that the national discourse of *ayllu*-union tension has been exaggerated for political gains and it is thus not surprising that we encounter practical cooperation rather than political drama at the local level. However, I also contend that there is another reason why there is no need to distinguish between the *ayllu* and the union at the local level: the fact that they are all seen to be doing the same thing. Any work, whether through the union or the *ayllu* or an NGO which feeds into the enabling or improvement of life on the land, can be accurately characterised as *llank'ay*. The

transformation of land, by all or any of these agents, is valued as *ayllu* work, therefore eliminating the need for distinctions

Chapter 7, the last chapter of this thesis, examines how migration tests the bond between people and land, and the extent to which migrants and their families who remain in the *ayllu* make efforts to prevent these bonds from being severed. It also explores the consequences of the total break – the loss of *runa*-hood and the transformation of land into wild, *q'ara* territory – and fears people have of these. I argue that when the purpose of migration and working in the cities is no longer about supporting survival in the *ayllu*, a person is no longer doing *llank'ay* – he or she is no longer transforming the earth and is thus no longer in the process of developing her personhood, being *runa*, or part of the *ayllu*. People who are no longer *runa* become *q'ara* (peeled, bare), and land that is left unworked also becomes *q'ara*. As *ayllu* personhood and the relationship between people and land in the *ayllu* are processual and created, maintained and developed through practice, they can be lost. By following four siblings who have all taken different paths in life, the chapter gives four accounts of the different types of migration going on in P'iya Qayma today, and the various outcomes migration can have in terms of the relationship with the land, the development of the self and one's sense of belonging.

In conclusion I argue that the value of *llank'ay* is located in its ability to transform people and land. This understanding of *llank'ay* pertains in the first instance to life in P'iya Qayma and the local context which includes Baptist practice and high rates of seasonal migration, but I also argue that it is illuminating to a wide range of pan-Andean issues. In particular it highlights the central position of processes of transformation to Andean ontology.

Chapter 2: A history of Kirkiyawí – National identity politics and the battles for land

In late May of 2008 I attended a large political meeting in the city of Cochabamba. During the preceding year the president, Evo Morales, and his party *Movimiento a Socialismo* (MAS) had been facing an increasing amount of national criticism and opposition, some of which resulted in violent clashes between pro- and anti-government demonstrators. One focus of the criticism was the new constitution, in the process of being drafted by the recently created Constituent Assembly, which aimed legally to enshrine the rights of Bolivia's diverse indigenous population. The meeting was made up of various pro-government groups, including unions, *ayllus*, IRMs and representatives from surrounding rural municipalities. The discussions during the meeting focussed on the importance of cooperation and unity between the different groups. 'We must put our differences aside and work together to support our president' – '*Todos somos campesinos, todos somos originarios*' (we are all peasants, we are all natives) – came the familiar cry several times throughout the day. These groups, Evo Morales' political base, represent Bolivia's rural and urban indian poor, a historically oppressed and exploited section of society that continues to suffer exclusion and racism. As such the groups present at the meeting had many things in common. Yet coming together, to back a president they all felt was the first president in Bolivian history to truly represent them, has been a process that is far from obvious or easy. Throughout much of history the powers of a grouping defined in one way has often been at the expense of one defined in a different manner, and even now the visions they harbour of the future are not in tune.

A month later, one Sunday in late June 2008, the village of Bolívar was busy preparing for a grand titling ceremony. The *Instituto Nacional Reforma Agraria* (INRA) (National Institute of Agrarian Reform) had arrived to award Kirkiyawí the legal personality of an *ayllu* which means that their already

awarded *Tierra Comunitaria de Origen* (TCO) status would be upgraded to ensure total rights over land and subsoil resources in the area. It took INRA five years to complete an investigation into the eligibility of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí to gain TCO status; they examined colonial documents, interviewed inhabitants and assessed borders with neighboring communities. The assessment process concluded that Kirkiyawí fulfilled the criteria. On a stage decorated with local weaves, a stamped and signed document was handed over to the senior *ayllu* authorities: the *cacique*, Don Vicente Arias, and the 10 *kuraj tatas*. This was not the first time that the *ayllu* has had to prove itself or fight for access to its lands. And it is ironic that the criteria controlling access to land this time were the very things that the governments of previous centuries had aimed to disrupt and eradicate. So, though there was a somewhat jovial atmosphere in the village and many happily saw the occasion as an excuse to have a few beers, the day passed by without much fuss and there was a sense that this was not the beginning of a new era or a turning point, but rather another event in a long line of demands, oppression – and sometimes small concessions – that have marked the *ayllu*'s relationship with the state.

These two events offer a glimpse into the complex web of factors that make up the political consciousness of the Bolivian poor. The relationships between the various sections of the Bolivian poor – the spaces and times of solidarity and moments of increased friction; their impulse to protect land and local identity, as well as reactions of fear or apathy toward state intervention, alongside the engagement with external markets and desires for assimilation into the *mestizo* middle class – need to be analysed within the context of historical experiences and memories.

This history chapter begins with some insight into the past of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, illustrating how power and politics have played a significant part in shaping the way Kirkiyawí functions today, particularly in terms of the organisation of land and positions of authority. The following section highlights forced as well as voluntary migration in the area, the exploitation of indian labour,

government-led identity politics and the attacks and defence of land. As we move toward the 1952 revolution and beyond, the discussion focuses on the rise of the unions; the specific ways in which resistance was articulated and the subsequent growth of the indigenous rights movement; and the transformed position and power of indigenous rights with the shift to a neo-liberal economy. The final part of this chapter describes the circumstances within which Evo Morales was elected president, noting the necessity of a broad coalition to his victory.

Ayllu Kirkiyawí and the Charka Federation

Whilst there is evidence, in the form of mentions in historical documents, that an *ayllu* Kirkiyawí has existed in its current location for at the very least 400 years, we only have scant details regarding its position in the Aymara kingdoms and later relationship with the colonial government. However, by assembling the material that does exist, an image of its place within a complex and highly politicised era of *gran ayllus* emerges. This image is crucial to bear in mind when confronting the later history of the Spanish invasion. In this section I construct a brief account of the history of Kirkiyawí at the time of the Aymara kingdoms and early engagement with the Spanish invaders. I note, as others have before me, the gradual fragmentation of the *gran ayllus*. The reality of this fragmentation is significant in order to comprehend the vastness of the project proposed by IRMs such as CONAMAQ (*Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas de Qullasuyu*) – the resurrection of indigenous nations, of fully integrated, functioning and powerful *gran ayllus*.

The history of the Bolivian *ayllu* is one of movement towards fragmentation (Molinié Fioravanti 1986; Murra, Revel & Wachtel 1986). Whilst the Aymara kingdoms were great administrative units with intricate and powerful political structures (Bouysse-Cassagne, Harris, and Platt 2004; Murra, Wachtel and Revel 1986; Molinié Fioravanti 1986), the present day *ayllu* is highly localised, and centred on subsistence and the relationship with the immediate landscape. Several recent ethnographic studies from highland Bolivia concur that major *ayllus* are rarely visible even if officially still in

existence (e.g. Arnold 1988 in Qaqachaka; Goodale 2001 in Sakaka). We know that the *ayllu* existed as a socio-economic institution during the period of the Tiwanaku Empire in the 7th to the 12th century AD. The Aymara speaking highlanders were one of several groups subsumed by the Tiwanaku administration. The power of the empire drastically diminished around the time of the first millennium, possibly due to successive years of drought (Klein 2003). During the following centuries the Aymara kingdoms gained political strength and battled each other for control over land, water and people (Silverblatt 1988; Murra 1978; Stern 1982; Rostworowski 1977, 1978). In the southern *altiplano* around Kirkiyawí, documentary evidence cites seven Aymara kingdoms: Charka, Qaraqara, Sura, Quillaca, Caranga, Chui and Chicha (Bouysse-Cassagne, Harris & Platt 2004). The Inkas and the Spanish colonists referred to them collectively as the Charka federation, or the seven nations of Charka, and later, as a colonial administrative unit, the wider highland area was known as the *audiencia de Charkas*. To the north of the Charka Federation lay the large Colla kingdom, a loyal ally of the Spanish when they first arrived, and on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the powerful Lupaqa kingdom. The Aymara kingdoms were by all accounts very wealthy, their riches were built on the mines and the camelids which were so numerous at the time of the Spanish invasion that the *altiplano* was thick with them (Klein 2003). At the time of the encounter with the Inkas, Charka and Qaraqara (named the Qaraqara-Charka federation by Bouysse-Cassagne, Harris, and Platt 2004) were two of the most powerful kingdoms in highland Bolivia. Their inclusion in the Inka Empire demanded diplomacy and efforts of allegiance rather than coercion.³⁵ For instance a Qaraqara lord was given the hand of one of Inka Wayna Qhapaq's daughters in marriage.³⁶ In tribute the Charka confederation supplied soldiers for the empire, and the Aymara section of the Inka army were renowned as great and fearsome warriors.

Ayllu Sura Qurpa Kirkiyawí, the full historical name of *Ayllu* Kirkiyawí, was

³⁵ At times the Aymara did resist and revolt. E.g. in 1470 there was a major revolt against the Inkas on the shore of Titicaca (Klein 2003).

³⁶ Inka Wayna Qhapaq (1464/68-1525/27) the eleventh Inka of the Inka empire and father of Atahualpa, the last Inka.

part of the Charka federation. Evidence collected by the Bolívar municipal office and by CONAMAQ concludes that Kirkiyawí was part of the Kingdom of Sura. However, Izko (1992) suggests that, in consideration of documentary evidence pertaining to border disputes in the area, the Turpa people, the ethnic group of Kirkiyawí, in fact comprised an independent kingdom, squeezed in between the larger kingdoms of Charka and Sura. According to Izko, Kirkiyawí belonged to neither nation, though it did form allegiances with both (Izko 1992:21). Kirkiyawí is mentioned several times in the 1646 third colonial *Revisita* of the Charka federation under the viceroy García de Mendoza, executed by *el Juez Visitador de Tierras* Don José de la Vega Alvarado. The documents recognise the existence of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí as an *originario* community dating back to Inka times but do not indicate whether the *gran ayllu* was an independent kingdom or part of either Charka or Sura (*Atlas de Los Ayllus Sura y Qurpa Kirkiyawí* 2002).³⁷

The Turpas, Izko claims, are something of a mystery, and though *ayllu* Kirkiyawí does feature at times in historical documents, information is sparse. At points Kirkiyawí is also referred to as Tanka Tanka, the name of the present day *jap'i* of which P'íya Qayma is part. Despite the paucity of data, we can be fairly sure that the Turpa lived in what is now P'íya Qayma and were probably governed by a *cacique* belonging to the same line as the present *cacique*, Vicente Arias and his uncle Marcos Mamani.³⁸

The Charka Federation was a strong, if unequal, ally of the Inkas. But the administrative machine and greater needs of Tawatinsuyu, in particular during the time of Inka Wayna Qhapaq, demanded that the federation adopt a

³⁷According to the *Atlas de los Ayllus Sura y Qurpa Kirkiyawí* the petition was signed by the then *cacique* of Kirkiyawí don Juan Domingo Fernández Mamani. However, Izko (1992) in his examination of the same document claims that the signatory on behalf of Kirkiyawí was a *cacique* by the name Juan Pedro Mamani. Whether these two people are in fact one and the same, whether there were two acting *caciques*, one for the *aransaya* and one for the *urinsaya*, during this time in Kirkiyawí or whether one of them was not a *cacique* but held another *ayllu* position, is unclear from the evidence.

³⁸According to people in Kirkiyawí now, the previous *cacique*, Don Marcos Mamani, can be directly traced back to the earliest rulers, including whoever signed the Third *Revisita*.

position of servitude and initiated a process of resettlement and reordering of Charka people and communities (Bouysse-Cassagne, Harris & Platt 2004). The Sura had direct access to valley lands in the temperate Qucha Pampa (Cochabamba) where maize could be grown and the nation was therefore strategically very important to the Inkas. In order to develop mass production of the crop, Sura people were resettled to Qucha Pampa where they provided part of the workforce of what became the 'bread basket' of Tawatinsuyu (Bouysse-Cassagne, Harris & Platt 2004). The Charka area was oriented around the Inka roads along which the produce of Qucha Pampa valley travelled to reach the rest of the empire. New administrative centres like that of Paria, positioned on the Inka road to Qucha Pampa in the Sura kingdom, diminished earlier power centres and the moving of Sura populations into the valley lands eroded the power base of the Aymara lords.

In 1538 the Charka federation was subjugated by the Spanish conquistadores Gonzales and Hernando Pizarro, brothers of Francisco Pizarro, who invaded what is now Peru and Bolivia on behalf of King Charles I of Castille. Having seized power from the Inkas, the brothers defeated the Aymara lords, marking the beginning of European domination over the lands and people. As a result of the European invasion, local polities were further weakened. In 1572 the colonial government, under the administration of Viceroy Toledo, ordered massive resettlements into *reducciones*, moving indigenous populations into villages or small towns and again breaking up existing hierarchies and networks. The colonial government treated the various ethnic groups as one homogeneous mass of indians and took no note of cultural and ethnic differences when organising the *reducciones* or indeed during any form of engagement with the indigenous population. This treatment began to affect the diversity of the highland kingdoms, draining them of their distinctiveness and possibly their desire to maintain the greater polities. However, as pointed out by Murra, Wachtel and Revel (1986), the *ayllu* did continue as a basic organising unit and whilst the power of the Aymara lords had eroded, the Aymara groups consolidated at the level of the moiety or minor *ayllu*. Some were able to recreate vertical and archipelago

structures with the lands that were still available to them and new lands that other groups had lost, while others diminished in size.

The internal workings of the *ayllu* economy, which Harris dubbed the ethnic economy, and its relationship with the wider national and international markets, has been a key theme in writings on Andean society and history. The ethnic economy entails the circulation of goods within the *ayllu* according to rules and rates which apply only to other *ayllu* members (Harris 2000). The Inka empire was characterised by the absence of markets and money (Murra 1978), so when the Spanish arrived with their focus on extracting wealth, the *ayllus* were suddenly confronted with capitalism. It is tempting here to create a nostalgic narrative which describes the shock of capitalism as the ruination of a moral exchange order. Brooke Larson (1995) writes that the topic should not be analysed in an overly dualistic way, contrasting market and non-market. Instead, she describes the relationship between the ethnic economy and surrounding markets as one of constant interplay, characterised by overlapping, inter-mixing and sometimes clashing systems of exchange. The surrounding economic systems, be they Inka, colonial, liberal republican, or neo-liberal, were in their turn dependent on products and labour from the *ayllus* as well as influenced by their organisation (Murra, Wachtel and Revel 1986; Assadourian 1979; Rivera Cusicanqui 1978; Choque 197; Murra 1978).

But even Spanish domination could not forgo the partial utilization of certain indigenous institutions such as the mita. Although this reuse detaches such institutions from their native context, its continued utilisation contributes to a perpetuation of an ancient framework, no matter how distorted. Colonial society was constructed from many more such Andean components than is generally recognised.

Murra, Wachtel & Revel (1986:7)

Historical and ethnographic records indicate that the *ayllus* of Northern Potosí occupy the same areas that they were working in the 16th century (Harris 2000). As recently as the 1970s Platt (1986) found that the Macha still practised an archipelago as well as a vertical exchange system and Harris

(1986) describes how during the same time period the Laymi *ayllu* was made up of discontinuous land and even far flung islands. However, in other *ayllus*, 'ethnic islands' of the archipelago were lost. Rasnake (1988) describes how the Yura have lost their outlying lands. In Kirkiyawí the people of *jap'i* or minor *ayllu* Tanka Tanka, to which P'íya Qayma belongs, still speak about a time when their ancestors had access to large sections of valley lands across the border of the *ayllu* (and now the department), with *ayllu* Sullk'a Samka and *ayllu* Saqa in the region of Sakaka in Potosí (Atlas de los *Ayllus* Sura y Qurpa Kirkiyawí, 2002). Izko (1992) confirms that documents from the *Tercera Visita* in 1646 include petitions to the colonial judiciary from *ayllu* Kirkiyawí to regain lost valley lands belonging to Tanka Tanka from Sakaka. The attempts must have been unsuccessful for those lands are now part of Sakaka. Kirkiyawí lost another section of valley lands in the east of the *ayllu* to big *haciendas*. These lands, now referred to as canton Challoma and Comuna, have never been reincorporated into the *ayllu*. After the agrarian reform in 1953, the inhabitants secured private land deeds for these valley fields, formalizing and completing their alienation from the *ayllu*. (See figure 2).

Another factor which played a significant part in the process of fragmentation was a change in authority structures. Rasnake (1988) describes a shift in 1781 from hereditary authority amongst the Yura, to a rotational system. This shift happened in a majority of *ayllus*, (Rasnake 1988) but interestingly not in Kirkiyawí, where, as mentioned, the post of the *cacique* remains hereditary. Why this shift occurred in most *ayllus* is still debated. The hereditary leadership elite had not always championed resistance against the invaders but instead identified with the Spanish elite and energetically collected tribute on behalf of the colonial state (Klein 2003), so it is plausible that the hereditary lords were rejected by their own communities and a rotational authority structure erected based on popular consent (cf Leach *Political Systems of Highland Burma* 1954). The new rotational leaders failed to collect the tribute satisfactorily so the colonial state instituted representatives, *corregidores*, who were charged with the

task.³⁹ The installment of *corregidores* shifted a previously internal power centre to outside the *ayllu*. The establishment of the Catholic Church in the rural highlands introduced an additional power structure which undermined the Aymara lords and their polities. The specifics of the decline of each *gran ayllu* might be almost impossible to know but the long process of fragmentation is undeniable.

Colonialism, Republicanism and Resistance

The relations between the Bolivian *ayllus* and colonial and republican governments have been characterised by the state's fiscal reliance on the rural population's contributions coupled with its desire to 'disappear' the uncivilised indian on the one hand, and rural populations' efforts to simply remain out of reach of the state, interspersed with their overt attempts at resistance and revolt, on the other.

Starting with the Spanish invasion in 1532 and the crushing of the Inka Empire, the colonial state's reconfiguring of the *ayllu*, both intentional and less so, was a constant throughout its dominance. The state reorganised *ayllus* into *reducciones* in order to maximise agricultural potential, enable bonded labour, and facilitate the running of a tributary tax system skewed towards the extraction of wealth from the rural indigenous people. The *mita* system was utilised to provide labour for mines across the *altiplano*, most famously for the silver town of Potosí with its *Cerro Rico* – the richest silver mine in the whole world in the mid-16th century.⁴⁰

Thousands left their rural highland villages during the 17th century in order to avoid the *mita* and other tax burdens on those with *originario* status (Saignes 1995). In new communities, these migrants were awarded the legal personality of *forasteros* and as such were spared the *mita* taxation. Sánchez-

³⁹ Kirkiyawí retained their hereditary *cacique* but were all the same encumbered with a *corregidor*.

⁴⁰ The *mita* demanded that one seventh of a community's male *originario* population should at any time be working in the mines without compensation. This resulted in constant movement between the mines and the villages, not just of the men themselves, but also of their families who regularly travelled to the mines with provisions for the *mitayos*.

Albornóz (1978: 27, in Lehmann 1982: 21) shows that in 1683, 45 per cent of adult male indians in what is now Bolivia were *forasteros*, suggesting extensive rural-to-rural migration as people left behind their own *ayllu* and the then heavy burden of *originario* status in order to continue a farming life with less fiscal pressure as a *forastero* in a new *ayllu*. The *mita* and tributary taxation continued to burden the rural population until the mid-19th century.

Along with taxation and forced re-settlements, the establishment of *haciendas* also worked to disenfranchise and dislocate the local populations. The seizing of *ayllu* lands and founding of *haciendas* during the end of the 16th century created a class of landless labourers who were bound through *pongueaje* to the *hacienda* lands.⁴¹ The second boom of *haciendas* in the late 19th century and early 20th century claimed a great expanse of *ayllu* land which had up until then remained in the hands of the Aymaras and Quechuas. In 1880 *ayllus* still held half the land and half the population in the highlands, by 1930 they were reduced to a third of both (Klein 2003: 147). Areas were variably affected by the expansion depending on the geographic locality and fertility of the land. A majority of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, along with much of northern Potosí, remained out of reach. The *pongos* (unpaid serfs) were set to work the very land which had previously been theirs or expelled as the village populations regularly exceeded the labour needed on the new *haciendas* (Klein 2003: 147). Some *ayllus* battled for their land in the legal arena. Many actually had private property ownership deeds drawn up in the 16th and 17th century by colonial land inspectors who designated the *kurakas* as owners of *ayllus*. The legal battles that ensued were largely won by the indigenous communities, especially in the highland area of northern Potosí. The victories were often enabled by the backing of local lawyers who belonged to a pro-indian conservative *creole* group opposed to the then liberal government.⁴² These lands were in the end acknowledged as excluded

⁴¹ Although many of the *hacienda* workers were *yanacondas*, a group that had been landless previous to the Spanish invasion and were mainly servants or slaves to Inka nobles (Klein 2003).

⁴² In Bolivia and most other Spanish colonies in South America, the word *criollo*, creole denotes people of Bolivian birth but of Spanish descent. During the colonial and Republican eras they were part of the ruling classes alongside the *peninulares*, those

from the Disentailment Act and the 1881 *Revisita* (Rivera Cusicanqui 1987). Despite pockets of victory, the turn of the century saw thousands of impoverished and landless peasants heading for urban centres.

After the 15-year long campaign by Simón Bolívar and Antonio José de Sucre to liberate the South American continent, Bolivia gained its independence from the Spanish crown in 1825. Although liberal republican governments espoused a desire to transform society in line with the ideals of the French and American revolution, and broader Enlightenment ethos, including those of equality and freedom, they concluded it would be a financially unwise decision to end legal slavery, so instead extended it (Platt 1987). Thus, colonial and racial divisions persisted through the republican years (Larson 2004:16). While the 'two republics' (the term used to refer to the legal and lived divide between the 'Spanish' and the indians), were in theory conceptualised as divided by race, Harris argues that the definition over who was indian was often based in their economic activity, for this was what mattered to the colonial and later republican state (1995a). Up until the late 19th century the very definition of indian was not only one of indigenous descent but also someone who did not participate in markets, and paid tribute instead. The 'race' borders were guarded against people like city-born indians, *mestizos* (Sp) (of mixed cultural heritage and descent) and freed slaves. All of these fed into the creation of an intermediary occupational stratum that blurred the boundaries and threatened to completely undermine the 'two republics.' As this growing intermediate class became an economic necessity, their position grew more complex – they simultaneously undermined the social order and were key to the functioning of politics and economics.

All the while the *mestizo* class grew, and figures such as the *chola*, the market woman with rural and urban connections and influences (Larson 1998; Seligmann 1989; Weismantel 2001), surfaced as a formidable in-between character. Words such as *mestizaje* and *blancamiento* describes the

transformation from rural indian to urban *mestizo* – the assimilation into the ethnically and culturally mixed middle classes through the results of inter-racial relationships but also through practice, such as changing dress, language and occupation (Rivera Cusicanqui 1993, Larson 1998).

The *mestizo* may have posed a threat to the integrity of the two republics but the indian, although fitting in well with the racially defined two republics, was also a problem (Larson 1998). In addition to their uncivilised nature and degenerative effects on society they also posed a very real threat of violent resistance. Just like the *mestizo* class, they had, due to their tribute payments and forced labour service in the mines, become crucial to the economics of the colonial state.

The ruling sectors were dependent on the stability of indian tribute; until the 1850s this made up 26 –52 per cent of government revenue (Platt 1987). It was not until the economy picked up, mainly due to guano exports and later rise increase in the world price of silver, that a new space was freed up where the ‘indian problem’ could be tackled more aggressively. At this point there was a shift to state ideologies of *mestizaje* (Jackson and Warren 2005). In dissolving the two republics, the government set out to civilise and integrate the indian. A first step in this process was to entice indians to engage in commerce. Accordingly, under the decree of the 20th of March 1866, the dictator Mariano Melgarejo began to auction off *ayllu* land. After decades of onerous tax burdens to protect their lands, the *ayllus* were now having this very land sold from under their feet. The government of President Tomás Frías continued the trend with the 1874 Disentailment Act, which legally dissolved indian communities and instituted a single universal tax law. The law which forcibly created private land deeds for indian communities in order to encourage market participation and assimilation with the aim of erasing ethnic difference (Jackson and Warren 2005). Along with the *Revisita* of 1881 it aimed and succeeded at ensuring the growth of *haciendas*.

Throughout this often crushingly oppressive history, the inhabitants of the

ayllus have been both victim and actor, stepping outside their ethnic economy and engaging in commercial activities within the wider markets in sophisticated ways in order to acquire goods, money and power. At times they also openly and violently resisted the colonial and later republican government. One of the most famous and pathos-filled moments of resistance in Bolivian history was Túpac Katari's siege of La Paz in 1781. With an army of 40,000 warriors, Túpac Katari and his wife, Bartolina Sisa, set up camp in El Alto and surrounded the crater city of La Paz for 184 days, cutting it off from all incoming supplies and bringing it to the brink of starvation. Katari was captured and quartered on the 15th of November, and La Paz quickly recovered, but his memory and his supposed last words: *Nayawa jiwtxa, nayjarusti waranqa waranqaranakawa kutanipxa* (A) (I die, but I shall return tomorrow as thousands and thousands) (Canessa 2000: 125), have remained at the heart of the resistance movement and wider indigenous rights movement (Canessa 2000). These utterances have gained new meaning with the election of Evo Morales. Morales himself invoked the sentence during his increasingly successful pre-election political career (Albro 2006). His government is hailed by many poor people as the final victory foretold by Túpac Katari. By connecting present day success to the final words of a long-dead hero, a narrative arch is created which conjures up the sense that this moment has been coming for the last 200 years and more. *Mallku* Sabino Veizaga, an indigenous activist born in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí and a key informant of mine, identifies the present as a unique historical moment, a *pachakuti* (A&Q) (time and place of return and revolution) (Bouysse-Cassagne & Harris 1987; Canessa 2000; Rivera Cusicanqui 1991) built on the back of the struggles of their forefathers, for the indigenous people of Bolivia to regain power over their lands and decolonise the country.

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Xavier Albó (1987) argues that the history of peasant movements, prior to the establishment of functioning unions, can be divided into two distinct phases, demarcated by the Chaco war that was fought between Bolivia and

Paraguay from 1932 to 1935.⁴³ Practically all uprisings from independence until the Chaco War were marked by communities' desperate defence of land (see also Irurozqui 2000), and they all ended in massacres by the army and the land-owning oligarchy. The second phase, post-Chaco war, witnessed a different set of objectives, allies and protagonists. The Chaco war took place in the wake of a dire political and economic situation. World tin prices fell in 1921 and liberal prosperity was fading. Small and medium mining enterprises went out of business, leaving only a small group of 'tin barons' (Klein 2003). The unions took their first faltering steps at this time but were swiftly and brutally crushed by president Saavedra, first in the massacres of the followers of Jesús de Machaca in 1921 and then the massacre of the miners of Uncía in 1923. The unintended consequence of the Chaco war was a nationalising effect and spread of solidarity (Canessa 2005, Rivera Cusicanqui 1987). Fighting and dying together in the trenches had fostered a pro-indian consciousness amongst the *creole* urban middle classes. A new-found discontent with the government among both *creoles* and indians was grounded in the army.

New left-leaning parties and movements emerged in the post-war era; one of these was the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR). In Cochabamba the tenant farmers successfully unionised. Here, solidarity between indians and various professionals and workers, such as teachers, war veterans, miners and urban workers, ran deepest. Cochabamba valley has a history of broad alliances and networks; it has long been an area of bilingualism, social mobility and a mixed market (Larson 1988, Harris & Larson 1995). A coup d'état led by Gualberto Villarroel López in December 1943 was the climax of this period (Rivera Cusicanqui 1987). During his three years in office, in coalition with the MNR, Villarroel officially recognised workers' unions and instituted pensions.⁴⁴ The decrees that came out of the First Indigenous

⁴³ Chaco war was fought over the control of the northern part of Gran Chaco which was thought to be rich in oil. There was a high number of casualties and no oil was ever found in the area, however, the sections of the Gran Chaco which were awarded to Bolivia have since been found to be high in natural gas.

⁴⁴ Remembered by many of Bolivia's poor as a hero and a martyr, his reputation is marred by his fascist sympathies.

Conference of 1945, which he convened, ended free labour on large estates, *pongueaje*, and regulated the master and tenant obligations. There was growing unease that the indian had not disappeared through assimilation as planned by the liberal oligarchy, but was growing into an increasingly solidified and exigent group (Rivera Cusicanqui 1987). In 1946, Villaroel was lynched following a period of increased clashes between the government and the oppositional conservative forces, as well as workers exercising their now legally established union rights to protest their working conditions. The old conservative oligarchy regained power. What followed has become known as the 'six-year period,' it was a time of rebellion, resistance and fierce retaliation characterised by indiscriminate violence. Again networks and solidarity grew between indians and other frustrated groups such as the members of the MNR. This time, however, it was in prison cells or in exile rather than in the trenches. MNR support grew steadily in the rural areas, whilst the MNR were interested in the support of the populous rural communities, indian demands fitted less readily into their vision of the future Bolivia: a modern, industrialised and socialist economy.

The Revolution and Beyond

After a three-day battle by miners, workers, various lower class sectors of the city, but very few peasants, the MNR coup on April 9th 1952 marked the Bolivian revolution. The MNR government brought in universal suffrage and, with the slogan 'land to those who work it,' the Agrarian Reform of 1953 ended the colonial feudal agricultural system. Former serfs were free to move, but as the promised land often never materialised, the 1950s and 1960s saw a big wave of rural to urban migration (Albo, Greaves and Sandoval 1981; Lazar 2008; Paerregaard 1997).⁴⁵ It took many years, sometimes decades, for the reform to be implemented everywhere; in some areas landlords in fact consolidated their control over the land (Goudsmit 2008; Izko 1983; Rivera Cusicanqui *et al* 1992). This delay resulted in a constant trickle of the recently enlightened from *ex-hacienda* lands to the

⁴⁵ A long drought and subsequent famine in the early 1950s on the altiplano contributed to rural to urban migration (Lazar 2008).

urban centres.

The post-revolution period saw the complete demolition of the oligarchic state, a move to a more state-controlled economy and the sponsorship of the federation of trade unions, *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB). COB has represented a large population of heterogeneous workers in Bolivia for a long time now. And the presence and power of the peasant union, CSUTCB, has deeply penetrated rural areas and politics.

Throughout history, much action taken by *ayllu* inhabitants, or peasants as they were referred to after the revolution, was motivated by the wish to protect their land (Albó 1987; Irurozqui 2000). Given that this was their priority, other considerations, such as the protection of social and civil rights, became secondary. For instance, the peasant unions supported the government long after the revolution, in particular their loyalty had been secured through the agrarian reform of 1953, then in 1964 General Barrientos signed the military-peasant pact which aligned the peasant with the government well into the 1970s, and at times located them in opposition to other social movements. The often politically conservative character of the rural highland population is not something that *ayllu* activists or the wider indigenous rights movements currently wish to acknowledge, but the memory of this remains alive within the union movement and it creates tension between the groups to the present day.

A project of homogenisation was now put in motion by the MNR: the indian would best be helped by being transformed into a modern worker. Indians were renamed *campesinos* (peasants), their identity and situation was considered one of class and citizenry of a new inclusive Bolivia (Canessa 2005), not culture or ethnicity, and the *ayllu*, with its leaders and traditions, went out of fashion. A class identity was imposed on indians as a precondition for political inclusion and access to resources, thus threatening marginalized groups with exclusion while simultaneously proclaiming them

as equals (Stephenson 2002; Yashar 1999).⁴⁶ The agrarian reform involved a massive land redistribution project and a big push to cultivate previously uncultivated land. The rural population, in exchange for their suffrage and the protection of their land, voted conservatively – backing the MNR and later military governments (Van Cott 2003).

Throughout the following decade the disappointment with the outcomes of the revolution grew amongst the workers. The rural, indian response to the new government and unionisation was varied and even contradictory, differences being very visible in the responses of the *altiplano ayllus* and their uneasy relations with the unions, on the one hand, and the loyalty to the unions which was widespread in the valleys of Cochabamba, on the other. Evident everywhere, however, was the systematic marginalisation and subordination of any attempt to elaborate a separatist indian-oriented ideology (Rivera Cusicanqui 1987).

In 1964 General Barrientos swept the MNR aside and initiated 18 years of military regimes, including the violent oppression of all social movements. However, by mid-1970 a more revolutionary attitude began to influence the rural poor. This combined identity and class struggles in the shape of the Katarista movement, a broad ideological movement spearheaded by Aymara intellectuals (e.g. Hurtado 1986). Their first public document, the ‘Tiwanaku manifesto,’ was a synthesis of the many currents involved in Katarismo, including the assertion of indian culture and history and the sentiment: ‘We are foreigners in our own country’ (Tiwanaku manifesto cited in Rivera Cusicanqui 1987:118). The Katarista movement worked together with the unions and took an active part in creating the peasant union, the *Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB). As a result class and indigenous identity were brought together in the name of resistance. Contemporary Katarismo seeks to articulate peasant and indigenous identity in organising rural sectors, a practice Kataristas like

⁴⁶ However, Yashar (1999) argues, the corporatist project to assimilate indians and get rid of ‘indianess’ to a great extent failed as large swaths of the rural areas remained beyond the reach and influence of the state.

to call 'seeing with both eyes' (Lucero 2006: 44).

Neo-Liberalism and the politics of identity

While Katarismo aims to 'see with both eyes,' the 1980s and 1990s saw a decline in political leverage of the labour movements and instead 'indigenous identity' became a highly effective concept through which to claim rights and power (Yashar 1999). The indigenous movements of the 1970s and 1980s criticised the revolutionary nationalist project for imposing a hegemonic *mestizo* model (Larson 1988). Ethnicity gained electoral market value in Bolivia, illustrated by the choice, and subsequent successful victory, of Aymara intellectual Víctor Hugo Cárdenas as a candidate for the vice-presidency, beside MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario) candidate Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (Assies & Salman 2005). Andean communities which had previously traded their indigenous identity for a *campesino* one underwent a process of re-indigenisation (de la Cadena 2000, Jackson and Warren 2005).

The 1980s and 1990s saw shifts in the political economy from a corporatist regime to a neo-liberal one, simultaneously indigenous identity become recognised as a legitimate position from which to raise grievances, claim resources and influence. The Aymara led movements gained currency in the international arena where indigenous rights were high on the agenda (Sieder 2002). After decades of indigenous identity being experienced as shameful and disabling to the nation, it became iconically national (Canessa 2006b: 243), and claims rooted in identity carried legitimacy which were recognised globally. During this time, the *ayllu* crystallised as an institution of particular interest and efficacy in the eyes of local IRMs, global donors and NGOs. In 1981, following hyperinflation, budget deficit and debt crisis, Bolivia became the first nation to default on the servicing of its international debt. The austerity measures embarked on by the then President Victor Paz Estenssoro in 1985, the 'New Economic Policy' (NEP Decree 21060), were a direct response to demands by the International Monetary fund and World Bank,

and based on the economic rationale of Jeffrey Sachs (Van Vleet 2008). On the street the NEP Decree 21060 became known as the *Ley Maldita* (accursed law). The policies removed price control and subsidies on agricultural products, petroleum and gas; froze wages; privatised state enterprises, including the petrol company (*Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos*, YPFB) and shut down state mining, dismissing a majority of the workers. NEP supplanted social rights with civil and political rights (Sieder 2000, Yashar 2005). Inequalities increased and the standard of living dropped (Assies 2000, Postero 2005).

This transformation in the economy was soon followed by a change in attitudes towards identity politics. In most of Latin America, due to the international pressures of the World Bank, International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations (UN), along with the domestic pressures of the IRM the 1990s saw a massive shift towards the 'politics of difference' (Sieder 2002) evident, for example, when the UN declared the decade between 1993 and 2003 that of indigenous peoples. Throughout Latin America, multiculturalism became the new vision of society. The ILO convention 169, at the time the only legally binding document on the rights of tribal and indigenous people, was widely ratified throughout the Latin American continent during the 1990s.⁴⁷ In Bolivia, a change in constitution in 1994 officially recognised Bolivia as pluralistic and multi-ethnic in character (Van Cott 2002). Along with the change in constitution, the years 1993-1997 saw a raft of legislation in response: this aimed at putting a multicultural and human spin on the neo-liberal model without undermining it (Albó 1993).⁴⁸ From the beginning of the decade indigenous peoples themselves had started articulating their demand for land and life within this framework of civil rights. In October of 1990 Amazonian indians, whose presence within the Indigenous Rights

⁴⁷ Bolivia: 1994, Colombia: 1991, Ecuador: 1998, Paraguay: 1992, Peru: 1993, Venezuela: 1999.

⁴⁸ These reforms included reforms regarding customary justice which allowed indigenous communities to resolve conflicts in a local manner as long as it did not contravene the national law or constitution. Other new laws of the time included: the Law of Educational Reform (1994) which focused on 'intercultural bi-lingual education'; the Law of Popular Participation (LPP)(1994); the Administrative Decentralisation Law (1995) and the Law of the National Agrarian Reform Service (INRA)(1996).

Movement had previously been negligible, began a 700-Km trek from Trinidad in the lowlands to La Paz in the highlands, to demand human and territorial rights. When the marchers reached the highlands they were greeted and joined by thousands of highland indigenous groups. This moment marked the beginning of a new arena and era of public debate and contestation for indigenous groups, where identity politics and human rights were found very effective and certainly better at attracting the attention of the national and international community than class politics (Stephenson 2002).

International media and development organisations now equated social movements with indigeneity, and simultaneously, these movements invoked indigenous identity, or at least reified versions of it. The 'hyperreal indian' (Ramos 1994), who embodies authentic culture and a privileged relationship with nature, became a reference point for indigenous people when drawing on perceptions of their identity for political purposes (Canessa 2006b: 253). For instance, the water wars of 2000 in the city of Cochabamba came to be seen as an indigenous rights battle when in fact it was a broad coalition of urban workers, peasants and unionists, whose most visible leader, Oscar Olivera, was not indigenous (Albro 2005). The international media assumed the indigenous slant and Oscar Olivera was happy to indulge it in order to increase legitimacy for the cause (Lazar 2008:8).

The *ayllu* could easily be defined as an indigenous institution and therefore an ideal recipient for national and international development. Indeed the 1980s and 1990s also saw a huge influx of NGOs anxious to work with indigenous groups (Arellano-Lopez and Petras 1994). In the political climate of the time, cultural and ethnic claims had more clout than class ones and the international support of the *ayllu* movement in Bolivia, along with the de-formalisation of the economy, increased competition and the promotion of active and individual citizenship appeared to entail the weakening and discrediting of the older movements rooted in more class-based protest politics (Andolina 2003; Lazar 2008; Yashar 1999). Not only did the unions

go out of favour but not all minority groups did equally well within this 'multi-cultural' context, thus undermining any notion of real plurality and inclusion. Hooker discusses the disparity between collective rights gained for indigenous groups in Latin America and Afro-Latinos, who gained nothing (2005). Collective rights were conditioned on claims being formulated according to the ruling citizenship regime which favoured the possession of distinct 'cultural identity' (Hooker 2005: 299). While this resulted in the complete exclusion of certain minority groups it also created uncertainty for those who were included.

The precarious position of the *ayllu* within this framework, as well as the relationship between neo-liberalism and indigenous rights, can be effectively grasped through an examination of the outcomes of the Law of Popular Participation (LPP), passed in 1994, and the Law of the National Agrarian Reform Service (INRA), passed in 1996. LPP consolidated municipalities in the whole of Bolivia and aimed at encouraging 'local participation.' The new municipalities were allocated 20 per cent of total national tax revenue, through the simultaneously established Co-Participation Fund (Thévoz 1999:188 cited in Blackburn and Goudsmit 2001: 587) and assigned the responsibility for the administration of the infrastructure of the education and health services. The INRA law was aimed at stimulating capitalist agricultural production by ending speculation on idle lands, and to guarantee indigenous land by creating a new legal mechanism for collective ownership, *Tierra Comunitaria de Origen* (TCO).⁴⁹ Both laws arguably aimed at encouraging the full assimilation of indigenous communities into the wider economy whilst employing a language of multiculturalism.

From the perspective of those who see the link between neo-liberalism and identity politics as something positive, the LPP and INRA are seen to combine both in their focus on decentralisation, ideas of popular participation and a strong civil society (Blackburn and Goudsmit 2001; Yashar 2005). At the very

⁴⁹ Investment in the new municipalities was significant. In the rural areas municipalities received a total of US\$112 million in 1997, compared to the US\$4 million they received in 1993

least municipalisation did lead to local elections of local councilors and mayors in which a third of the positions were filled by people of indian and peasant descent (Ayo 1997:333 cited in Blackburn and Goudsmit 2001: 587). Considering that these groups had previously had next to no official representation within national politics this is noteworthy. However, ethnographic accounts indicate that the LPP and INRA have neither created neo-liberal subjects nor empowered the *ayllus*. Van Cott (2000) argues that multicultural citizenship reforms in Latin America were put in place by the ruling elite in order to create the illusion that they were attending to the needs of their voters when in fact, in the dismantling of the corporate state, they were increasingly unable to guarantee the material and social needs of the population.

René Orellana Halkyer (2000), in her work on the outcome of the LPP and INRA, shows how laws aimed at creating political and economic participation, in fact had a localising and divisive effect. INRA required defined and stable identities in order to set up TCOs, confer legal personality and thereby citizenship. This involved a localisation and confinement of people. The LPP and INRA policies push for market-friendly alienability of land, relationships and identities through decentralisation and economic incentives for individualisation. Simultaneously they create inalienable relationships, through which a locality and a legal personality becomes a condition of citizenship. As Andolina (2003) has stated, the policies of this period were often inherently contradictory. Postero (2007) details how the effects of LPP, and accompanying reforms, was a reinforcement of traditional power structures and the cementing of new patrons, the NGOs. McNeish (2001) describes how the state sponsored processes of participatory development and decentralisation in *ayllu* Santuario de Quillacas failed: the logic of the participation encouraged was a specific one in a specific economy and multi-lateral donor system, which clashed with local ideas of organisation, rights and responsibilities. McNeish observed how the local people viewed the new government legislation with a considerable degree of apathy and suspicion. Although the LPP did not threaten jobs and economic rights they were seen

as part of a government ploy and part of a homogenisation project. Even the creation of the TCOs made many suspicious that the government wanted to liquidate unions. One of McNeish' informants, an ex-Katarista militant, believed that the aim of municipalisation was the separation of rural local government from urban central government and recreation of the 'two republics,' Both McNeish and Halkyer evidence how municipalities cross-cut and divided *ayllus* and TCOs, and how the establishment of new local hierarchy, the municipal mayors, served to distance many from their legal rights as the new local governments abused their power in connection with the establishment of communities' legal personality.

Neoliberal reforms and the increasing presence of NGOs have thus changed the political landscape within which the *ayllu* functions. Whilst the *ayllu* was placed centre stage and gained new legitimacy it was also forced to conform to a specific and narrow concept of an indigenous community and the rights and resources awarded were done so according to criteria reflecting this narrow concept (Van Cott 2000:25).

Broad social movements and the victory of Evo Morales

Throughout the last seventy years of Bolivian history, big moments of social change have come about with the mobilisation of broad movements of solidarity, where interests of class and ethnicity converge and support the same cause (Van Cott 2003, Postero 2005) – the 1952 Bolivian revolution was one of these, the end of the military dictatorships in 1982 was another. Most recently, and hailed in almost millennial terms, has been the election of Evo Morales.

While political gains had been made by some IRMs and *ayllus*, in the 1990s the economic reforms and structural programmes which were having a devastating impact on basic social provisions were increasingly opposed by large segments of society. In 2000, during the presidency of General Hugo

Banzer,⁵⁰ large scale protests erupted in Cochabamba in response to the privatisation of water. During the following years a sense of civil engagement and disobedience grew (Albro 2005). A focal point of protest was the Chapare coca growers' on-going resistance against the government-led coca eradication programme.⁵¹ One of their prominent leaders was Evo Morales. The year 2003 saw an escalation in violence and the public uprisings were now centred in La Paz and directed against the government's tax increases, which in turn responded with increased military aggression. The police, grieved by an unfavourable wage deal, also joined the protests. The military were confronted with outbreaks of urban warfare which resulted in several deaths. In October of that year the series of uprisings which have now become known as the 'gas wars', erupted. The incumbent Sanchez de Lozada government had signed a deal to sell Bolivian natural gas to an international consortium, and anger and indignation spread in El Alto (Lazar 2008). In October of 2003, amidst fierce battles which saw 80 people dead, Sanchez de Lozada resigned

In the wake of this anger and violence, Evo Morales gathered support and strength. By virtue of being Aymara born, non-white and a union man he was recognised as a leader by the Bolivian poor. In December of 2005 Morales and his party *Movimiento Al Socialismo* (MAS) won the election with 53.7 per cent of the votes. Prior to his official inauguration in La Paz, he was inaugurated in an Aymara ritual at the archeological site of Tiwanaku, once the centre of the Tiwanaku Empire, before a crowd of thousands of Aymara people and representatives of leftist movements from across Latin America. The following year Morales opened the Bolivian Constituent Assembly and

⁵⁰ 1971-1978, 1997-2001. Banzer ruled the country as a dictator during the 1970s. His second period of incumbency was awarded through democratic elections.

⁵¹ Coca growers who have been key to oppositional politics, developed their politics in resistance to the 'war on drugs.' In 1999 Harry Sanabria wrote that at the time coca growers did not pose a threat to the structures of privilege but that at the same time the increasing offensive against coca cultivating peasants may be generating an oppositional culture and political consciousness similar to that of the miners' in previous decades. Coca growers of Chapare (where many rural poor and ex-miners migrated to make a living) became the hub of indian resistance - in part because of their engagement with the traditional coca leaf (although it is largely grown for export and for the refining of cocaine) and due to the fact that their members were indian.

tasked it with rewriting the constitution in order to include, and reflect, the needs of the country's indigenous groups.

Since the election of Evo Morales, the relationship between the *ayllu* and the state has shifted once again. This time there is a belief that the MAS government with its indian president is on the side of the rural poor, and the latter turn out in millions to vote them in. MAS draws on trade unionism, populism and indigenous democratic values and struggles – ‘political syncretism’ (Lazar 2008:174) – in order to secure its voters’ loyalties. According to Albro (2005), MAS and Evo have re-defined what it is to be indian/indigenous in Bolivia. In order to include the largest possible number in their voter-base, and unify potentially disunited supportive organisations, they posit that indian identity in Bolivia is rooted in experiences of exclusion, displacement and engagement in the informal economy. Thus they include both rural and urban populations, creating a pluralism of indigeneity. When Evo refers to himself as an Aymara indian, he is not claiming to be living in an *ayllu* but rather to being indigenous in this new plural way (Albro 2005: 450). Experiences of political inclusion and a renewed pride in being indian, as well as rejection of exploitative forms of labour, building on the growing feelings over the last decade, can be encapsulated in two famous phrases: 1.) – the Katarista addition of *ama llunk’u* (Q) (do not be servile) to the famous of Inka moral codes: *ama quilla*, *ama llulla*, *ama shua* (Q) (do not be lazy, do not lie, do not steal), which was publicly endorsed by the then indigenous vice-President, Victor Hugo Cardenas. 2.) – Felipe Quispe’s quick retort to the journalist who questioned why he engaged in illegal protests and vandalism – ‘so that my daughter never has to become your housemaid.’ While Cardenas and Quispe may inhabit different positions on the political spectrum, they both publicly encouraged an attitude of defiance amongst the oppressed indians.

The victory of Evo Morales and his continued support is in part due to the joining of forces of a range of civil society organisation. Consolidation of the peasant and indigenous movement was a key factor in the rise of Evo Morales

(Van Cott 2003). Although Morales' rise to power is a success story for the indigenous poor of Bolivia, the old debate of class versus ethnicity or culture rears its head amongst his supporters and there is trouble in the ranks. The actors within the movement who brought Evo Morales to power have started to diverge, and the different goals of identity politics and class politics have re-emerged. The unions have returned to a position of influence in relation to the state and civil society, and the indigenous rights groups and activists who have gained tremendous ground in the last twenty years have now visibly separated themselves from these unions.⁵² The largest and most active highland organisation is the *Consejo Nacional de ayllus y Markas de Qullasuyu* (CONAMAQ). Founded in March 1997, it is a confederation of traditional governing bodies of highland indigenous communities in Bolivia (García, Chavéz etc 2004:323).⁵³ Its stated aim is restoring the self-governance of 'original nations' including 'collective rights to land and natural resources, redefinition of administrative units and self-determination exercised through indigenous autonomies and direct representation in state institutions' (Schilling-Vacaflor 2008: 1). It wants to reconstitute the pre-colonial structures of the original nations and to recreate Qullasuyu, the southeastern corner of the Inka empire which was largely coterminous with highland Bolivia.⁵⁴ For CONAMAQ, the election of Evo Morales was simply a first step toward their long-term goals.⁵⁵

⁵² Active unions include the highland rural labour union, CSUTCB; the women's rural labourers union: Condeferación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia – Bartolina Sisa (CNMCIQB-SB); the union of highland indigenous people who have migrated and settled in the eastern lowlands: *Confederación Sindical de Comunidades Interculturales de Bolivia* (CSCIB); the Cocalero unions; and the miners' union: *Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia* (FSTMB) which was particularly strong until the 1980s, when many miners lost their jobs. It has since suffered a decrease in influence.

⁵³ Specifically, it represents the following 16 *suyus*: Jacha Carangas, Jatun Quillacas, Asamajaquis, Charkas Qara Qara, Council of *ayllus* of Potosí, Qara Qara Suyu, Sora, Kallawaya, Leco, Larecaja, Colla, Chui, Paca Jake, *ayllus* of Cochabamba, Kapaj Omasuyus and Yapacaní.

⁵⁴ They also wish to rename Bolivia Qullasuyu. However, as the original Qullasuyu never included the lowlands of the country, the highland indigenous groups are effectively drawing exclusively on their local history in their imaginings of a future decolonised Bolivia, and thereby excluding the lowland indigenous groups. This is something which does not go unnoticed by the lowlanders and has created much tension within the national indigenous rights movement. The lowland indigenous groups have their own federation – *Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano* (CIDOB).

⁵⁵ Other notable organisations working in Bolivian civil society are *Movimiento Sin Tierra* (MST), a landless movement based in the eastern lowlands which was formed in 2000

The breakdown in the relationships between the unions and IRMs are visible in the rifts occurring within the *Pacto de Unidad* and *Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio* (CONALCAM), both are national alliances set up to bring most of Bolivia's social movements together to ensure the sustained power of Evo Morales and his party.⁵⁶ In December of 2011, both the confederation of low-land indigenous groups, CIDOB (*Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano*) and CONAMAQ formally withdrew from the *Pacto de Unidad* (Unity Pact). Senior members of CIDOB critiqued the Pact for deviating from its prior purpose of pressing for indigenous rights in the constitution and, as the president put it, 'only to say yes and submit to the decisions of the government' (Adolfo Chávez CIDOB President, Schilling Vacaflor 2008:155).

Ethnicity and class have been used interchangeably by Indians themselves in order to mobilise resistance and formulate legitimacy. From the first evocation of indigenous identity during the 1945 the First Indigenous Conference held by president Villarroel, to the 1952 revolution when class was the banner under which many Indians were claiming justice and social equality, to the second wave of resistance in the name of ethnic identity, organised by the Kataristas. Today people in Bolivia, both the rural poor and urban *mestizos* lay claim to an Indian identity, or general Indian heritage, in

and has garnered a fair amount of media attention, and *Federación de Juntas Vecinales* (FEJUVE), urban neighbourhood committees in El Alto, which have joined to form a national organising body. Another interesting group worth mentioning is *Taller de Historia Oral Andina* (THOA) established in 1983, a research organisation originally made up of *ayllu* born Aymaras who had received a university education. They have tasked themselves with recording the oral history and the customs of the indigenous of the Andes. In addition they have political goals and like CONAMAQ they work towards the reconstitution of the *ayllu* and the re-establishment of the Aymara nations.

⁵⁶ Founded on 22 January 2007, during the Constituent Assembly of 2006-2007. CONALCAM mobilises its member organisations in support of the 'process of change' which includes the drafting and implementing of a new Constitution as well as a variety of social reforms. CONALCAM includes as its members the president, the governing party and the constituent assembly. In 2008 when the new draft constitution that Morales and his government had promised their voters met with opposition, CONALCAM was the key mobiliser of a march to pressure the National Congress to authorise a referendum on the new constitution, which the Congress enacted on October 21 (Schilling-Vacaflor 2008).

some contexts while rejecting it in others (Bigenho 2005, Canessa 2005, Van Vleet 2005).

The causal ties and complex relationship between neo-liberalism, post-modernity, multi-culturalism and indigenous movements have been debated by many scholars. Although there is no space here to enter into any detail on these debates I will briefly mention a few points. Yashar (1998), for instance, argues that ethnicity has come to play a major part in political movements in Latin America as a reaction to neo-liberal reforms and specifically a reaction to the threat on land. However, in neo-liberal economies radical identity politics are at risk of being subsumed by multiculturalism. As Hale (2002) suggests, multiculturalism is the *mestizaje* discourse for the new millennium, offering a parallel mix of opportunity and peril. In addition to the discussion regarding the relationship between IRMs and multiculturalism there are plenty of analytical examinations of the awkward fit of identity politics and neo-liberalism.⁵⁷

The employment of a particular identity at a particular time for political benefit is not something that indigenous groups have suddenly conjured up, instead it has been an integral part of their historical experience. For centuries they have been on the receiving end of the shifting policies of ruling governments aimed at casting and re-casting their identities as rooted in class or ethnicity. The word instrumentality invokes a cynicism which is based on the assumption that people are not really as indigenous as they claim to be. But if personhood and identity is something which is perceived as practised and performed, then a performance of indigeneity is no less real than any other form of personhood.

⁵⁷ See for instance Albó 2003, 1995; Andolina 2003; Brysk 2000 Kymlicka 1995; Lucero 2006; and many of the authors in Beverly, Aronna and Oviedo's edited volume *The Postmodernism debate in Latin America*. 1995 as well as many of the articles in Assies, Van der Haar and Hoekema's edited volume *The Challenge of Diversity, Indigenous People and Reform of the State in Latin America* 2000, including Albó, Calderón and Hopenhayn.

Conclusion: History and the Local

While it is true that the election of Evo Morales has been a milestone, the effects of his presidency should not be overstated when one looks at a village like P'iya Qayma. The change in the relationship between the people of P'iya Qayma and the distant governing body in La Paz is paralleled by an often unchanged relationship *vis-a-vis* local government and other non-state actors. On the local level, local government blurs with private institutions and other organisations and is seen as quite separate from central government and Evo Morales, who is fetishised by the rural poor (cf Goudsmit 2006). Municipally employed engineers move around the *ayllu* on motorcycles identical to those used by the NGOs in the area. Union meetings and municipal meetings merge into one another and there is little effort made or indeed desire to keep the various institutions separate. Any positives emerging from the national programme of resource allocation and improvement of infrastructure is credited to Evo Morales and the central government, not the local municipality who in fact are situated at the point of delivery (cf Goudsmit 2006). Any perceived failures and lacks in the rural areas are blamed on the local government and placed within a long history of state oppression, interference and indifference. The reactions of people to present-day failures of the state is also part of a long history of resistance or apathy (cf McNeish 2001).

The interests which wish to bring back the Aymara nations and award self-governance and self-determination to the *ayllus* are in a position of partial power, wrestling with the unions for control and decision-making. It is this that makes the *ayllu* a highly relevant topic for investigation and discussion. As the *ayllu* is repeatedly brought onto the political stage to prove its worth, its purity, morality and ability to be a blueprint for the future indigenous nation, the concept of the *ayllu* becomes ever more removed from what it is in its lived-in form. The image of what it needs to be and what it is desired to be becomes solidified in individual and cultural consciousness and threatens to overshadow any grounded reality: the processual and experienced world of the *ayllu* which this thesis will illustrate. Nonetheless, that local world has

been unmistakably shaped by these broader historical events.

The present political sentiment of the *ayllus* should thus be understood in light of the themes of their history: the allegiances and wars of the large polities, fragmentation, state oppression, resistance, the loss of land and the fear of losing land, racism and the defence of culture. The memory what Albó (1987) calls 'the arc of events' *does* remain in peoples' minds. They are aware, to a greater or lesser degree, of the persistent attempts by the Bolivian state to 'modernise', privatise and erase *ayllus* from the time of independence to the revolution, the pacts made with governments that were constantly broken and the daily encounter of racism, and ethnic differentiation and attack on cultural difference, Historical memory and the still present outcomes of this history feed into everyday life and actions. They are part of the unsurprising misgiving felt by indian people today towards any government legislation and part of how people make choices regarding the continuation, change or end of a culturally distinct way of life.

Following the meeting in May 2008 Evo went on to win the vote of confidence Revocation Referendum in August of that year with a majority of 67.4 per cent. In the February of 2009, 61.4 per cent of the population voted in support of the new constitution and in December of 2009 Evo was re-elected president with 64.2 per cent of the vote. For some this election was a victory of co-operation and of the struggle to unite. As we shall see in Chapter 6, people in P'iya Qayma did not view their support of Evo Morales in terms of union versus ayllu power and casting a vote for an 'indio' president was an obvious and easy choice, but neither did they expect their actions to bring about revolutionary change

Chapter 3: P'iya Qayma – A lived in landscape; practice during an agricultural year

The ayllu is where our potatoes come from, what gives us our llamas and our sheep; it is what we eat.

(Doña Paulina, 55, resident of P'iya Qayma).

Human beings do not, in their movements, inscribe their life histories upon the surface of nature as do writers upon the page; rather, these histories are woven, along with the life cycles of plants and animals, into the texture of the surface itself

(Ingold 2000: 198).

Life in P'iya Qayma is shaped by the agricultural year; the everyday tasks change significantly from season to season, and the constant rhythm of the producing earth and the working people creates a lived-in and 'temporalised' landscape (Ingold 2000). This first chapter introduces the village, landscape and work of P'iya Qayma, and its people. It gives an account of their daily tasks throughout the agricultural year, describing how intimately people know the land they work and how meticulously they organise and consider every bit of their surroundings. Through the villagers' repeated and familiar activities, the materials of the surrounding landscape and the ground beneath them are moved, shaped and transformed. Work is relentless and tough. During the course of the year, and depending on the task, work is hard in different ways, some activities demand brute force, for instance ploughing which digs into the earth, whilst others, like herding, skimming along surface of the land, demands endurance. But experiences of work can also be filled with joy and pleasure, such as at the various moments in the agricultural calendar when people come together, work side by side and rejoice in their shared accomplishments. Throughout their own lives and the lives of their parents and grandparents they have shaped the surrounding landscape and

each hill and field has a purpose, a history and a character. I argue that agricultural activity, *llank'ay*, is key to the shape of the relationship between people and land in P'iya Qayma and integral to how people perceive themselves, the character and power of the land around them and to how they construct and value social relationships. In this analysis I employ the notions of dwelling (Ingold 2000; Lemaire 1997) and Ingold's concept of taskscape (2000) in order to emphasise the effect of agricultural tasks on the lived-in landscape of P'iya Qayma. People and the land around them constitute a simultaneously physical and cultural space, which over time is constantly transformed and recreated through the interaction of the two. This chapter discusses the lived-in landscape and as the work of each season is described, it introduces the families of P'iya Qayma. In line with several other works on landscape (see Allerton 2009a, 2009b; Basso 1996; Lemaire 1997; Tilley 2004, 2006), it emphasises practice.

P'iya Qayma village – a named and temporalised landscape

The names of places in and around P'iya Qayma indicates how the land is used and thought of, and also provide a constant reminder of the many previous generations who have lived and interacted with the land in the area. Before the Spanish word *comunidad* (community/settlement) became the most common way to describe *ayllu* villages, the word *saphsi* was the locally used term referring to *ayllu* settlements (PDM 2007). *Saphsi* comes from the word *saphi*, which means 'root' in both Quechua and Aymara. The word *ayllu* exists in both Quechua and Aymara and there is some debate regarding its etymological roots. One suggestion is that it comes from the Aymara *ayru*, which means sprouting plant. These words tell us of a vision of human settlement as springing from, and rooted in, the earth. This resonates with Ingold's emphasis on a landscape that is lived *in* rather than *on*, where people are embedded in the earth itself, not unlike plants.

As I joined in the agricultural labour and herding I became aware of the naming of every field and knoll. The map below is the cumulative result of a lengthy period I spent learning places, names and information. More often

than not my questions regarding the name or usage of a bit of land would receive short and un-detailed responses such as: 'It is a field' or, 'It belongs to a family.' But as I continued to show an interest in fields and hills, and my questions became more specific, for instance: 'What is the name of the place where you are growing *cañawa* this year?' the answers became more detailed.

Both Aymara and Quechua words make up the place names, reflecting the history of the region and the linguistic shift in the area during Inka times, and early colonial years, from the former to the latter. Notably 'P'iya Qayma' is Aymara, meaning hole, maybe chimney hole, in a cave.⁵⁸

There are three different types of place names in P'iya Qayma. One denotes the way a place looks or what it does, such as 'dry riverbed' or 'wet riverbed'; another describes the activities performed by people in the place, for instance, 'little observation point,' 'little herding girl's field' or 'agricultural packing field;' and a third refers either to the animate character embodied in the place or references events and myths associated with the place – such as 'trembling uncle' or 'song of the fox.' As well as these three types, the names of fields often include added information regarding the usufruct rights of the piece of land, the most common being – 'communal' or 'of the family.'

Figure 3: Map of P'iya Qayma

(See larger version of map at back of thesis)

⁵⁸ This was how that name was translated to me several time in P'iya Qayma, in dictionaries *P'iya* regularly translate as *hole*, but *Qayma*, which local inhabitants translated to me as 'cave' does not appear in any dictionaries at all.

invocation of a place provides the indexable power, through myths and legends, to retrieve previous events of domination. In the wider literature, the significance of naming and place-making has been described by Keith Basso (1996), amongst others. Names of places, and the act of naming, offer an insight into the worlds of meaning of the surrounding space. Basso describes how amongst the Apache places not only have names but stories, histories, morals and memories attached to them.

In P'iya Qayma places did not necessarily evoke moral fables in such an overt way as Basso found amongst the Apache, nor are they said to have been named by the *achachilas*, but the names reflect and give character and agency to the landscape. And they serve as constant reminders of what it is that people do in these places, and what their parents have done before them, giving the places a history – creating an already 'dwelt-in' world. When I asked why a place had the name it had, the most common response was a shrug and a retort amounting to: 'That has always been its name, I do not know why.' Indeed, most places were probably named before the lifetimes of any of the current inhabitants. Along with the response above I was also often given speculative answers, such as, 'Maybe the field is called the song of the fox because a fox once lived there.' The fox is in fact mythologically important within the Andean pantheon, linked to the higher mountains and to the minerals within (Bouysse-Cassagne & Harris 1987). The legendary status of the fox is something that people in P'iya Qayma are most certainly aware of yet they are not sure why that specific place has come to be called song of the fox. So whilst they may not know, or may not talk about, who the 'trembling uncle' is, they are aware that someone once knew the origin of the name, and recognize that they are living on a piece of land with which many people before them have had a relationship, and which is full of purpose.

The Aymara and Quechua concepts of space and time fit well with Ingold's concept of a temporalised landscape. The Quechua and Aymara term *pacha* which simultaneously translates as time, place and earth, according to the 16th century dictionary of Gonzales Holguin (Bouysse-Cassagne & Harris

1987), is key to understanding the Andean links between time and space. In unpacking the term *Pacha*, insight can be gained as to how time and space and the temporalised landscape is conceived of in Andean cosmology. *Pacha* includes references to eternity and completeness but it can also be used as a suffix for emphasis and completion, to highlight through demarcation. This combination of totality and limits within the one phrase appears contradictory, but, Bouysse-Cassagne and Harris (1987:48) offer a conciliatory explanation: *Pacha* might easily be translated as the universe – a totality. However, while the term includes notions of abundance and reproduction, it does not refer to abstract or eternal time but rather to time delimited and lived in, materialised time. This materialised time is all-encompassing and cyclical in a manner which does make it akin to the eternal ‘universe,’ yet, it is also bounded in historical epochs known to man and marked in the materiality of the land lived in. Materialised time, then, and Ingold’s temporalised landscape are in fact flip sides of the same coin.

Tom Zuidema (1964, 1982, 1990) and Wachtel (1982) have detailed the relationship between time in space in the Inka civilisation through work on the *ceque* system. The *ceque* system was the spatial organisation of the Inka capital which was organised to encode dynastic history as well as calendric knowledge (Rappaport 1994: 41). Joanne Rappaport (1994) has drawn attention to the history present in everyday material culture amongst the people in Cumbal, a Quechua-speaking indigenous community in the highlands of southern Colombia. Rappaport notes the history imbued in the *cabildo* members’ staffs of office, analogous to the *tata santísima* staffs in Kirkiyawí.⁵⁹ She also points to ancient boundary ditches, *zanjas*, as material history. The specific positions of various *zanjas* indicate present and previous ownership and are thus concrete reminders of how land has been inherited, lost and fought for, over many generations. In addition, Rappaport shows how the stone terraces on the hillsides, many built in pre-Columbian times, are material sources of historical information regarding the division and ownership of land as well as agricultural practice (Rappaport 1994: 76-96).

⁵⁹ For further discussion of *Tata Santísima* see Chapter 6, page 218.

Hundred year-old stone walls, built to prevent erosion, similarly line the landscape of Kirkiyawí. In Cumbal and Kirkiyawí, the past is etched into the landscape in an overt material way which impacts both on the present and the future, it is temporalised.

Pacha is a lived-in time and it is in some senses a cyclical time. The Quechua word *ñawpa* means both in front of the observer and in the past, while the word *qhepan* means behind the observer and in the future. History, that which has passed, is known and the future is unknown, people are imagined as walking into it backward. Rappaport even suggests that history can still be acted on and corrected as it lies in front of the observer (1994:52). History in P'íya Qayma is grounded in the material and can be encountered in the physicality of the land around, it is considered to be visible and known and inexorably part of the present. The lived-in landscape in P'íya Qayma is named, known and shaped and has been so for many generations. It is temporalised through the shifting seasons and the associated changes in agricultural activity, and through the visibility of past activities and events which remain connected to the present.

The people of P'íya Qayma and the agricultural year

Up to now I have spoken of various kinds of inhabiting the land. This should not be taken to imply mere occupancy, as though inhabitants, already endowed by descent with the attributes of substance and memory that make them what they are, were slotted into place like pegs on a pegboard. Positions in the land are no more laid out in advance for persons to occupy, than are persons specified prior to taking them up. Rather, to inhabit the land is to draw it to a particular focus, and in so doing to constitute a place. As a locus of personal growth and development, however, every such place forms the centre of a sphere of nurture. Thus the generation of persons within spheres of nurture, and of places in the land, are not separate processes but one and the same.

(Ingold 2000: 149)

This section describes the activities of a full agricultural year and, through the seasonal tasks, introduces the people of P'íya Qayma, who will re-appear throughout this thesis. Their characteristics and inter-relationships are recounted in this chapter to provide a contextual understanding of the themes in the chapters to come. Understanding people's engagement with the

land throughout the year will help us imagine the temporalised and lived-in landscape of P'iya Qayma, and demonstrate how *llank'ay* lies at the core of the relationship between people and land. Life in rural areas is shaped by the rhythm of agricultural demands and tasks. Zuidema's work (1977) demonstrates that the Inka calendar expressly connected agricultural tasks to wider social and political organisation, as well as to religious rituals, sacrifices and *fiestas*. Henry Stobart suggests that the agricultural year symbolises a microcosm of the human life cycle (2006: 162). Given that all converted to Baptism some time back, many of the religious rituals that mark the agricultural year in the Catholic villages (cf Gose 1994; Stobart 2006) have been scaled back – what is left is the labour itself. In light of this, the thesis focusses on agricultural activities rather than ritual cycle.

Ingold's concepts of 'dwelling' and 'taskscape' encapsulate the indivisibility of the landscape/land and the society that works it, showing how dwelling connects the person through physical activity to place and landscape. He argues that only through temporalising landscape can we conduct an inquiry into the conditions of life lived and avoid misleading divides of 'the scientific study of an atemporalised nature, and the humanistic study of a dematerialised history' (Ingold 2000: 208). These concepts, alongside his focus on the skilled body and his description of the lived-in landscape as the condition of action, are valuable in helping us appreciate the centrality of agricultural activity.⁶⁰

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⁶⁰ Although Ingold's concept of 'dwelling' is based on his work with hunter-gatherers and many of his ideas spring from, and are described through, the specifics of hunter-gatherer life, the basic tenets of the constant dependence of people on land, and their intense awareness of their surroundings, can be applied to settled farming communities as well.

Ingold avoids employing the word 'land' as he claims it is an abstract category which is everywhere on earth and also homogeneous. Instead he prefers using the term 'landscape,' arguing that unlike 'land' it is textured, heterogeneous and lived in (2000:190). But both words may be used: 'land' is at times more appropriate than 'landscape,' especially in reference to farming communities who carve into the soil in the fields, because the word land includes a sense of what lies beneath the surface, the earth itself.

My first visit to P'iya Qayma, a couple of months before I moved to the village, was at the beginning of the cold winter, in May, and came about with assistance from the doctor of the Vila Pampa⁶¹ health clinic, where I had arrived by riding pillion on a series of *alcaldía* engineers' motorcycles. Dr. Jaime was a tall man and well-liked by his patients. He was going to P'iya Qayma to give the primary school children their regular check-ups and vitamins and also to visit a heavily pregnant woman who was immobilised as a result of intense back and hip pain. He offered to take me to the village on his motorcycle and introduce me to the villagers. After the visit to the school, we picked our way between rocky outcrops and jumped across a small stream before arriving at the house of the pregnant woman. Ducking to get through the low door we entered into the adobe house, the pregnant lady was lying down on her side in the bed, her two young children climbing over her, her husband was tending to the cooking and with a look of relief on his face at the sight of the Doctor, quickly beckoned us inside. This was how I first met Don Tomás Veizaga Mamani and his wife Doña Nieves Ramos Chajhuari, Dr. Jaime's patient. Don Tomás and Doña Nieves became my main informants and close friends during my time in P'iya Qayma. Don Tomás' paternal family, Veizaga, is one of the *originario* families of P'iya Qayma, and Doña Nieves, a woman of great humour and capabilities, is a daughter of the neighbouring village of Vila Victoria. Together they have three small children, Zulma, three, Israel, two and baby David who, *in utero*, caused Doña Nieves such trouble. Tomás is a thoughtful man and a heavy smoker, often pondering the questions of life with a cigarette between his lips. He is a good deal older than Nieves and has three children from a previous marriage. His first wife died ten years earlier. His two elder children, Victoria and Dominga, no longer live in P'iya Qayma but his son, Pedro, 16, still resides with the family. Before their marriage Doña Nieves had mothered a child with a man from the village of Molle Pongo. This boy, aged six at the time I first came to

⁶¹ A larger village in the *zona alta*, a 1.5-hour walk from P'iya Qayma, it has a secondary school and a health post. There is a phone line in the neighbouring village of Molle Pongo. It is run on batteries as there is no electricity.

P'iya Qayma, was residing with his father and Doña Nieves had no contact with him. Don Tomás told me about him. Doña Nieves, however, never spoke of the child and I never asked.

Two months after this first visit I moved into a small adobe house in P'iya Qayma. It was late July and Don Tomás and Doña Nieves were about to begin preparing their fields for sowing and planting. This, I later discovered, fitted in with the way the activities of the agricultural year are determined and constrained by the dry and cold winter months of May, June and July and the rainy, warmer summer months of December, January and February. The months of rain and temperate days and nights are the growing season, the spring and autumn months are periods when land is prepared. Every year there is a fear that the frosts will come too soon, before the crops have had time to mature. Few plants can grow in the short window of opportunity that the summer months afford. This limits the produce to tubers, grains and pseudocereals such as quinoa and cañawa.

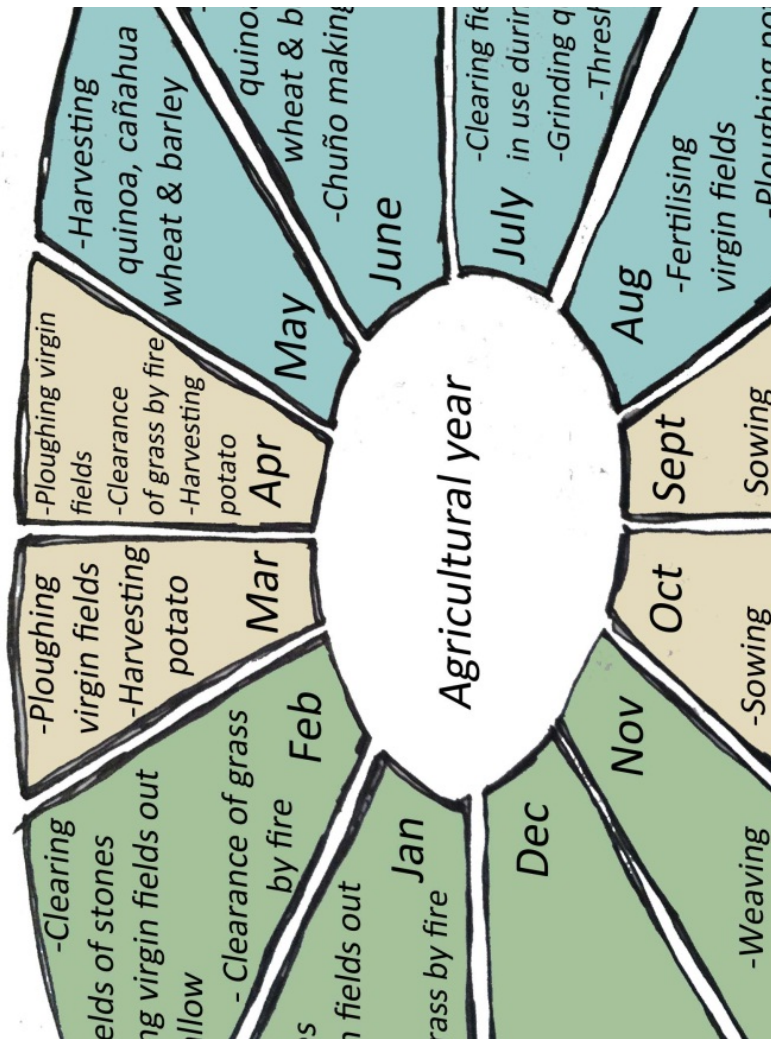


Figure 4: The agricultural calendar

At this time of year, just as the winter starts drawing to a close, the air is crisp and the earth is crumbling as it has not rained for many months. Hair is matted with the dry sand eroding away from the mountainside, and in the evenings people hurry home before the dark to avoid the intense cold which sets in as soon as the sun dips, chattering their teeth and rubbing their arms they desperately get the fire going in their kitchens to create a warm shelter from the quiet, freezing expanse outside. Transforming the dry mountain soil into fertile land demands a great deal of work. Not much can grow in the

extreme conditions of the high Andes, wild vegetation is limited – some short and scraggly trees occasionally push through the ground in sheltered places and the dry clumps of long grass, *ichu*, dot the landscape – the land appears strikingly infertile and even hostile to human survival. For those fields that were coming out of fallow this agricultural year the extensive preparation had begun back in January. Land that has never been worked before, or is brought out of fallow, is virgin soil (*tierra wirjin*) and needs to be awakened ritually. Coca leaves are chewed and spat on the ground, little shots of alcohol are sometimes passed around, half is drunk and the remainder poured on the ground. Not everyone performs these rituals over virgin soil: some deem them un-Baptist, while many do scaled back, unceremonial versions of the corresponding ritual performed in the Catholic villages, and consider that a satisfactory compromise. The question of religion and agentive land will be further explored in Chapter 5.

After the field has ‘woken up’ it must be cleared of stones; this is a back-breaking job and, depending on the field, very time-consuming. Thick gloves, bought from town, are used, but tired hands are still cut by the sharp stones. With chisels and mallets, the larger stones are split and once they have reached a manageable weight are shifted from the field. In an effort to expand one of his virgin fields, Don Tomás even used dynamite to move some of the larger boulders. The explosions did break up some of the previously unmovable rocks but after much effort he only gained a few square meters and was unhappy with the results. At this stage, but more often towards the end of the summer months, in April, the tufts of thick grass that grow in abundance in the highlands will be burnt in order to clear the ground. If this is done during the dry months of winter the risk of the fire spreading is considerable. A few years before my arrival, in 2007, such a fire caused the untimely death of Don Tomás’ father, Don Pascual. During my stay, several grass-burning fires got out of control; thick smoke filled the village, the heat spread rapidly through the valley and the efforts of everyone were needed to stamp them out with wet cloths and branches. Once a field is clear of stones and grass and the earth sufficiently softened by the rains the ground is

broken open with a plough; this is called *barbecho*. After this initial ploughing the virgin fields are left, to be returned to at the end of winter, in August. Attention switches to other fields and their produce, as the tasks of harvesting, transformation of foodstuffs and storing take over.

In August the land in P'iya Qayma is said to lie open and demands feeding, its 'hunger' at this time of the year is described by many authors as being sated through ritual libations and sacrifice (see Abercrombie 1998; Carter and Mamani 1989; Fernandez Juarez 1995; Harris 2000; Stobart 2006). Stobart relates that in a community in *ayllu* Macha, Northern Potosí, this is the month when the mountain peaks are married to the virgin earth in order to make her reproduce over the next few months, a union facilitated by music and rituals (2006). In Baptist P'iya Qayma none of this occurs. Instead, it is the time of year when the fields awoken back in January are fertilised with sheep dung – added only to virgin fields. In the following two years the crops will get their nutrients from what is left in the field and from what the previous year's crop has put back into the earth.

Over the year, an almost meter thick layer of dung had built up in the sheep corral. Don Tomás and Pedro worked for hours filling sacks with sheep manure and then walked the laden donkeys up the side of Wayna Tanka to one of their virgin fields. As the work continued the fields on the hillside changed colour from a dusty yellowish grey to a deep brown; much pleased, Don Tomás exclaimed: '*Ya, bien sumaj mikushanku*' (Sp & Q) (Now they are eating very well). Although the land is no longer fed with sacrifice, *fiestas* or music, this remains a time concentrated on feeding: the hunger of the land is satisfied by the tons of sheep dung served up with the physical efforts of people. Through labour the earth is transformed and prepared for production.

Pedro joined his father in many of the heavier agricultural tasks but he was usually not home during weekdays as he had recently returned to secondary school. Having struggled with schooling, he had previously dropped out. Don

Tomás believed that Pedro had something wrong with his eyes and this was the reason he found school work difficult. It was his older sister, Victoria, who convinced Pedro to return to school, liaising with his teachers and arranging for his re-registration. Victoria is Don Tomás' eldest daughter. She is a 23-year-old primary school teacher who works in a small town close to Quillaqollo in the Cochabamba valley where she now owns a small house. Don Tomás rarely saw Victoria but he often spoke of her and was clearly proud of her accomplishments; he regularly recounted the day of her graduation ceremony and the details of the golden graduation ring that he had purchased for her. He was pleased that Victoria, rather than marrying immediately, had chosen to pursue a career first. Often he told me that he wished I could meet his eldest for she was an educated woman like me, and like him she loved music and song and had mastered many instruments.

Don Tomás' second daughter, Dominga, lived in the main village of Bolívar together with her fiancé, Don Gregorio, and their two children. They were planning to marry but as Don Gregorio's godparents were in mourning at the time he wished to wait a while longer. It is not unusual for couples to have children together before marriage and neither is it particularly unusual or unaccepted for them to separate instead of going through with a wedding. Many women bring a child into a marriage, this child will then be accepted by the new husband as his own and the fact that the child is not biologically his will not be hidden. When men described their families to me, they often pointed out that the first of their several children was their wife's child, clearly stating that they were not the fathers. In Don Tomás' own case, however, his wife's first child had remained with its father.

Of all Don Tomás' older children, then, only one was living in the village and was available to help with agricultural tasks: and then only on weekends or during the holidays. This is not unusual in the village: but during the moments of sowing and harvesting family members no longer living in the village are expected to return in order to join in the work. For many families this is a contentious time; often grown children or siblings who have

migrated are unable to take time away from their urban responsibilities and so leave elderly parents, at these crucial agricultural times, with the impossible task of managing the work on their own. Don Tomás has ambitions for his children, and as the following chapters unfold we shall see how he, and many other villagers, attempt to negotiate the desires and dreams they harbour for themselves and their children, of both working the land well in the *ayllu* and succeeding in an urban centre.

After the virgin fields have been fertilised, all the fields need to be ploughed in preparation for the sowing. In the case of virgin fields, this is the second time they are ploughed during the year, after the initial *barbecho*. Ploughing is one of the more physically demanding jobs of the agricultural year. In many parts of the Andes the hand plough is still in wide usage (cf Gose 1994), but in P'iya Qayma everybody employs bulls and successful ploughing is dependent on good bulls (see footnote 14). Bulls need to be taught to plough. They need to be made accustomed to the ploughing equipment, to feel comfortable together and pull in the same direction. A young, untrained bull can make ploughing a very drawn-out process. Bulls are expensive and require a lot of forage, so not every family owns its own. Instead people borrow a pair of bulls for several days, in order to plough their fields, in exchange for labour or other favours such as the lending of donkeys. As discussed in Chapter 1, this type of exchange is referred to as *ayni*.

Before the actual ploughing begins, the men prepare their bulls by harnessing them and guiding them up and down the fields. Learning to drive the bulls and open the earth is a key accomplishment for a young man in his path towards full personhood and the bull is a potent symbol across the Andes of masculinity and virility (Harris 2000). The teenage boys were always eager to try driving the bulls, while their fathers appeared far less enthusiastic at the thought. It was more common to see a tired 60-or 70-year-old man drive bulls than a young man in his early twenties. In addition, older people usually had more extensive and deeper networks of *padrazgo* and *compadrazgo*, meaning that they had greater ability than the younger generation to acquire

the use of bulls through *ayni*. Just as the skill of ploughing can only be acquired over time and through hard work, through the development of physical ability, so access to fields, and the cementing of social networks, equally necessary in order to work these fields, are also attained gradually.



***Figure 5: Ploughing the aynuqa fields in August.
Wayna Tanka can be seen in the background.***

Once the fields have been fertilised and the earth turned, it is time to sow the crops. During sowing and planting time, in September and October, the whole family – and those members of the extended family who have arrived from the urban centres – work the land together. For a few weeks, everyone in the village, old and young, spends the days in the fields. During this period the animals will often be put to graze in prepared corrals or in nearby paddocks which have been ‘saved’ in order to provide enough food for them. Sometimes the teenage children will herd the livestock. Husbands and wives put all their effort into getting the seed into the ground. It is a joyous time of the year; the cold nights have come to an end, cracked hands and feet begin

to heal as the dry air is filled with soft moisture and bodies relax in the warmth. The work is less backbreaking than the previous clearing of fields, and less so than the harvest to come. There is hope and excitement over what the land will produce this year.

Don Tomás asked me to assist with the planting of barley seeds in one of his family fields. Barley planting indicates that the field is now entering its third and final year of usage. The ground has been worked many times in the last few years and this is obvious through the lightness of the soil, it separates and moves easily as the plough cuts through it. But work was not easy for me, and while Pedro patiently explained to me many times how the sowing should be done, I struggled with the task. With a fistful of seeds he demonstrated the correct way of walking behind the plough sprinkling the barley into the newly created furrows of moist earth. Walking steadily alongside the furrow one jerks the wrist letting just a few seeds drop so that they land evenly spaced and along a steady line in the furrow. Several times Pedro stopped and corrected me; as I threw the seeds they insisted on falling in clusters, and to my frustration I never got it quite right. In the autumn, I watched with some shame as the furrows I had planted were filled with unevenly spaced barley, something Pedro enjoyed pointing out to me teasingly on several occasions. It was clear that he had the body and skills for sowing, for making the land produce well, while I did not. Throughout the agricultural year, I was regularly confronted with this fact – that I was inadequate at transforming the land, and by extension that it requires a specifically developed person to work the land effectively.

Don Tomás' homestead lies at the very foot of Wayna Tanka, with Warp'iyta Kaka's rocks very visible. Next door is the homestead of his father, Don Pascual, who died in the *ichu* fire. The present inhabitants are Don Tomás' stepmother (that is his father's widow), Doña Severina, an old woman with eyes turned blue by glaucoma, and his sister Doña Filomena, a short woman with small hands and teeth, and his sister's son, 15-year-old Alberto. Doña Severina, like Doña Nieves, was born in Vila Victoria. She married Don

Pascual when she was in her early 40s, a few years after the death of his first wife. She never bore any children and although she is close to her stepdaughter, Doña Filomena, her relationship with her stepson is vexed. Both parties expressed their dislike of each other to me on several occasions. According to Don Tomás, his own mother drank herself to death when he was very young and his stepmother never treated him with any of the kindness he yearned for at the time. At any mention of her stepson, Doña Severina simply tuts and says that he is a difficult man. The husband of Don Tomás' sister, Doña Filomena, was from the village of Coyuma where she lived with him and their son until his sudden death, followed soon afterwards by the death of their infant child. Doña Filomena then decided to bring her surviving child, Alberto, and move back to her own village and into the household of her father and stepmother. Alberto does not know much about his father and rarely visits his father's village of Coyuma. He has no interest in working the land there; his father, he told me, died of laziness and he would not want to live in a place where everyone would know him as the son of such a man. Alberto and his mother work the fields which she inherited from her father, Don Pascual, together. Doña Filomena told me that since the death of her father she has become more dependent on assistance, *ayni*, from her brother, Don Tomás, but as Alberto is now growing into a young man and able to complete an increasing number of 'male' tasks, she is less reliant on her brother.

Having grown up in neighbouring households, the cousins, Alberto and Pedro, appear the best of friends. Both have lost parents and have been through the restructuring of households and as such have several experiences in common. They have a small house of their own, between the two homesteads, with a room each, and are often seen holding hands and listening to music on a small tape recorder together. Don Tomás spoke of his responsibility toward his nephew Alberto and is as concerned about securing his future as he is about his own children's'. His concern is magnified by the fact that Alberto's claim to communal land in P'iya Qayma is uncertain. As will be described in the next chapter, access to land is mediated through

many factors including descent. However, Alberto proved a promising student and appeared successful in most pursuits that he turned his hand to, including both mining and embroidery, so Don Tomás was confident that his fatherless nephew would have a good life.

At the beginning of my second week in P'iya Qayma I met another key informant and soon close friend. I travelled in the school truck with the older children of the village to the secondary school in Vila Pampa. In Vila Pampa I visited the school and I also stopped by to see my original contact and friend, Dr. Jaime. In his waiting room sat a woman I vaguely recognised; her recognition of me, in contrast, was instant. She was from P'iya Qayma and, as it happened, lived only a couple of houses away from my own. Her name was Doña Juana Cuyo Condori. As time went by, she, along with her husband, Don Valerio Chajhuari Cunorama, and their six sons and two daughters, did their utmost to make me happy during my time in P'iya Qayma. That afternoon we walked home together from Vila Pampa and that evening I was invited to their home for the evening meal. Doña Juana, with her round dimpled face and short arms, had the strength and sense of humour to make life in the highlands appear easy. Her children, ranging in age from 19 years to six months, had all inherited their mother's warmth and vitality, in particular her teenage daughter, Rosalia, who was abound with energy and laughter. Don Valerio had crooked teeth and a slight limp; a kind man, he was apparently utterly content with life.

When it came to working the land, this family was engaged in close relationships with that of Don Tomás and Doña Nieves, as I observed during the planting season. The relationships of labour exchange, although viewed as dictated by custom, were not completely prescriptive. That year the communal *aynuqa* fields were being planted with *cañawa*. The fields lie in a large plain and are divided into long thin strips, *parceles* or *chakras*. Each family works between two and six strips depending on the size of the family. It was early October and, out in the fields, lunches and breaks were taken in company with fellow villagers with everyone sitting together talking and

eating. Fields had been worked soft and were ready to be sown, the turned earth looked moist. Don Valerio had travelled into Oruro for a few days, and as Doña Juana could not drive the bulls herself Don Tomás was helping her with her family's *aynuqa* fields. Don Tomás and the bulls made the final furrows while Doña Juana walked behind throwing the seeds on the earth. Doña Juana and Don Valerio are Don Tomás and Doña Nieves' *padrinos de matrimonio* (sponsors of wedding/marriage). Linked through *padrinazgo* they help each other when necessary, in an equal form of labour exchange (*ayni*). Don Tomás told me that his relationship with Don Valerio and Doña Juana was full of *ayni*. He explained that his ploughing would not be specifically repaid but Don Valerio and Doña Juana were '*buena gente*' and good workers and would always help him when assistance was needed. Don Tomás listed to me the reasons why he had helped Doña Juana with the ploughing that day: because *ayni* is what we do in the *ayllu*, because they are our *padrinos* and because they are *buena gente*. Their exchange of assistance was simultaneously negotiated through *padrinazgo*, *ayllu* rules, neighbourliness and friendship – embodied in the phrase *buena gente*. This is typical in P'iya Qayma, people are bound together in several different types of relationships. As the population in P'iya Qayma is small everybody has a connection to everyone else in the village based on kinship, *padrinazgo* or *compadrazgo*. This renders most people acceptable partners in *ayni* exchange, the decisions regarding which relationships of *ayni* to activate are often based on factors such as perception of ability to work hard and mutual affection and most importantly on social relationships built up over time, rather than those created in a ritual moment.



***Figure 6: Don Tomás ploughing and Doña Juana following behind, sowing.
In the background another family are taking their lunchtime break.***

When I lived in P'iya Qayma I occupied a house belonging to a man named Don Severino Chajhuari Veizaga, who had left the village to move to Oruro many years before. His homestead stood empty, the tap in his courtyard slowly dripping. It was his brother Don Tiburcio Chajhuari Veizaga, and father Don Basilio Chajhuari Chui, who offered me the house and helped me settle in. Don Basilio, a soft talking and slow walking man, and his unmarried daughter, Doña Casimira Chajhuari Veizaga, a sociable and always impeccably presented woman, along with Don Tiburcio and his family, were also crucial to my life and work in P'iya Qayma. Doña Casimira proved a chatty and instructive neighbour. She divulged the gossip of the village with great satisfaction, including talk of her sister-in-law, Don Tiburcio's wife, Doña Vincenta Delgado Choque, for whom she did not have many kind words. Her interest in the church was paramount in her life and so she eagerly told me of their Baptist traditions and beliefs. She also taught me to grind, wash

and toast *quinoa*, and spin wool. Despite my much admired camera and clear cache as a wealthy European, Doña Casimira tended to me and my inability to perform the many tasks she attempted to teach me, with affectionate pity. As her glance scanned my body and clothes I could see myself through her eyes: by breathlessness, clumsy movements, burnt red face, big heavy walking shoes, poorly fitting and always filthy jeans and large white ankles. She dedicated much time to teaching me *llank'ay* and though I certainly improved in some areas, I never quite satisfied her.

Don Tiburcio, energetic and with a hint of mischief in his glance, and Doña Vincenta, a thin and often tired looking woman, lived across the village path from Don Basilio's house. They had married young and now had 6 children. The two eldest sons, Santos (22) and Calixto (20) lived in Oruro with little inclination to move back to P'iya Qayma. They were both recently married but neither had children yet. The two daughters, Teresa (18) and Nicolás (16), were still partly based with their parents but spent much of their time in Oruro with their brothers. Teresa had recently married a young man from a nearby village over the border in Potosí and had begun spending more time in his home village, although the couple often went to Oruro for bouts of work and also periodically stayed with Don Tiburcio and Doña Vincenta. The young couple had their own little hut in the homestead which Teresa had put a great deal of effort into decorating with weaves and posters. Recently married couples often reside together in the homes of both their parents before establishing an independent homestead. The move from a parents' household to one's own home is a drawn out process for young people, paralleling the stretched out way that other social relationships, such as *ayni*, are established. Although Don Tiburcio and Doña Vincenta appeared welcoming to their new son-in-law, Doña Vincenta had complained to me, and to most of the village, that she did not think Teresa's new husband was wealthy enough; nor did he show any particular promise. Soon after my arrival Teresa lost her first child in premature labour, the family appeared stoical about their loss and Teresa swiftly returned to work in the markets of Oruro. Don Tiburcio and Doña Vincenta's two youngest children, both boys,

Angel (eleven), and Javier (six), lived in P'iya Qayma and attended local schools. Angel told me he wanted to be a doctor, while Javier wanted to work the land like his father.

In a pattern that is common with married women, Doña Vincenta had come to the village from elsewhere, and retained important links with her home. She was born and raised in the village of Tangaleque, part of the *zona baja* in Kirkiyawí. She had access to land in Tangaleque but choose to not work that land as the village is a long day's walk away. Her family in Tangaleque were working her land for her and after harvest time she was visited by a relative who brought her some potatoes from her family fields. The importance of eating the produce from one's home village was a recurring theme in P'iya Qayma and the rationale behind this will be discussed in depth in Chapters 5 and 7. During the first half of my stay in P'iya Qayma, Don Tiburcio had taken up the mantle of local *ayllu* authority leader, *jilanqo*. He often came by my house in the mornings to see that I was well. We drank tea and chewed coca leaves, giving me a chance to ask about his daily tasks and the responsibilities of being a *jilanqo*.

We spoke often about the value of work. All work is hard but some tasks are seen as more demanding than others, and the greater efforts needed to produce a crop, the greater its value. *Cañawa*, for instance, is a labour-intensive crop and only small amounts are finally extracted after a great deal of work on large plots of land. However, it is highly nutritious and a clear favourite among the villagers, especially the children. It is mainly consumed in powdery form, *pito*. *Pito* can be eaten in this form, which is how it is usually consumed when it makes up part of a packed lunch. It is also poured into sweet tea to make a healthy, tasty drink. '*Este cañawa, ashkata llankanikupaj*' (this *cañawa*, we work hard for it), the elderly Don Calixto told me as he reclined into the clump of grass during a break from sowing, '*Pero, bien bonito es, lo mejor tierramanta kan*' (but it is very good, it is the best from the land). People see a clear causal connection between the work that you put into the land and what the land then gives to you. It is not the labour

itself that produces the *cañawa*, and one can never be sure how the land will eventually produce, but hard work is seen as crucial to how the land will then go on to provide.

Just as the potency of *cañawa* is seen as a fair result from the hours spent on hands and knees for these tiny kernels, the staple potato is perceived as fair product from the labour intensive virgin fields. Virgin fields are always sown with potatoes. The potato is the central component in the local diet and its importance is seen to be reflected and enhanced by the extra effort that the virgin field demands in order to produce it. In one year a family will plant several fields of potatoes and far fewer fields of *quinoa*, *cañawa*, barley and wheat. As a result not all fields are used for the full three years; instead extra effort has to be made to awaken virgin fields. The importance of the potato to survival in the *ayllu* means that land is not always used to its full potential. If there is no time to grow the labour-intensive crops of *quinoa* and *cañawa* on a field, it is returned to fallow after just one year of production.

The value attached to intense efforts to transform the land also affects perceptions of gender and work. The everyday tasks in P'iya Qayma were partly divided on gender lines, with complementarity between men and women: a feature commonly found in *ayllu* communities (see Harris 2000). However, in P'iya Qayma, a good woman is not one who excels in cooking, though this is appreciated, or weaving, though again this is noted, or even bearing and raising children, but rather someone who is thought to be a hard worker. So despite subscribing in theory to a gendered labour division, villagers' preference for industrious habits trumps any such ideology. Women are primarily thought of as workers in their own right, rather than domestically focused complements to their ploughing husbands. Don Tomás told me several times that he had a good wife in Doña Nieves for she worked hard, she could walk far and carry heavy loads. Don Tomás explicitly stated his preference for hard-working women over childbearing ones who have heat in them, bleed often and have many children, but are not strong workers. Women's' productive efforts are not valued any less than

reproductive activities, in fact in Don Tomás case the opposite is true. Not just men, but also women, judge each other according to ability to work hard. Casimira explicitly told me she did not want to enter into a relationship of *ayni* with her sister-in-law, Doña Vincenta, for she did not know how to work hard. Instead she chose to exchange labour with Doña Nieves who, she stated, was an excellent worker. Women are highly valued as workers, and often more so than men. For instance, Doña Vincenta is considered lucky to have two strong teenage daughters with whom she can share many of her daily tasks, the crucial one being herding. Doña Juana often lamented her many 'useless' sons and wished that she too, just like Vincenta, had two teenage daughters. But she was very pleased with the one that she did have, and when we were all out working in the fields, she would often wink and smile at me whilst nodding towards Rosalia and say – '*este imitcha, bien fuerte es, mejor de varones, sumaj llankan*' (this girl, she is very strong, more so than the boys, she works well and hard).⁶² The value of teenage daughters to women is exacerbated by the fact that most boys attend secondary school while girls are often kept at home once they have completed primary school, teenage boys are also more likely to join their fathers in periods of work undertaken for money in the city of Oruro.⁶³ Just as Doña Juana proudly notes Rosalia's brute strength in the field, rather than her skills in performing 'female' tasks, so Doña Nieves emphasised the strength and energy of her daughter, Zulma: her stamina to walk long distances and the fact that, unlike her comfort-loving younger brothers, she never slept during the day as a toddler or needed carrying past infancy. Whilst this thesis does not explore gender issues it is worth noting here that in P'iya Qayma the role and work of women and men were rarely described as complementary in the sense of being opposite and inhabiting discrete and different spheres. Instead teamwork was emphasised the value of all family members were essentially measured in the same way – according to their ability to perform *llank'ay*.

⁶² *Imitcha*, is a diminutive of *imilla* (Quechua and Aymara), girl, it denotes affection and is common usage.

⁶³ In the P'iya Qayma primary school there are an equal number of girls as boys attending, but the school bus to Vila Pampa secondary school picks up only one girl out of eleven pupils.

While it was certainly clear that household should ideally, or at least usually, include both men and women and girls and boys, unmarried people were still considered 'complete' *runa*. Just as single adults may be viewed as fulfilled people, marrying a spouse does not automatically make someone a *runa*, arguably a runahood needs more than man and women, value is also attributed to age, experience and skill, as well as animals and land – all these things work towards 'fuller', 'wholer' set ups. So, whilst not engaging with the debate on gender in the Andes, the evidence from P'iya Qayma does suggest that the centrality of the 'complementary couple' to Andean cosmology does not match up with lived realities in this area.

A form of work, which, as mentioned, is largely performed by women, is the herding of sheep and llamas. This task is different from those of labouring the field as it spreads out across vast distances, engaging with surface materials rather than being focused on burrowing down into the soil. The task is also oriented by season, and often dictated by the demands of work in the field. Men too engage in herding, in particular in November when women enter an intense period of weaving. They also tend, albeit less intensively, to the male llama flocks. These male llama flocks, including both those castrated and not castrated, have to be kept separately from the rest of the herd and are often left to graze for days and weeks on the hills. As such they do not demand the daily attention that the female herds and calves need. There are two types of llamas: *ccara* (Q), which are larger, have shorter hair and are bred for meat, and *tampuli* (A): which are smaller, long-haired and bred for the wool they produce. The excrement of all llamas is collected and used for fuel. Due to the altitude very few trees grow in the area so it is crucial to maintain a llama herd big enough to produce ample fuel. Llamas tend to defecate in one specific spot, which makes it easy to collect the fuel. Don Tomás often referred to this habit of the llama as a sign of how special they were.

Every day women cover great distances with their sheep, llamas and small children to find good pastures. Little toddlers wander the lands with their mothers and learn about every field, hill and brook; they learn their names

and what each is used for. Having reached good grazing grounds, the women sit down and tend to babies, spin yarn, crochet and weave small belts or hat bands using a stick in the ground and their own belts as a makeshift loom. The pre-school children play and the women talk. Every morning before she sets out, a woman will decide which grazing ground she is heading for. She will base her decision on the time of year and which pastures other women are likely to use that day and have been using in the previous weeks. A woman will never set out in the morning on an unplanned search for good grasslands; she is fully aware of her options and will make an informed decision in advance. Usually two or three women converge on the same spot and so have their lunch and spend time together. This is when many female friendships are made and cemented. In contrast to the busy domestic setting and the tiring walk with bleating and thumping animals, the few hours in the middle of the day offer calm and time to talk. Occasionally they put their yarn aside and go in search of a sheep that has wandered too far, but most of the time they enjoy their picnic and company. Small babies are often undressed and shown to other women. Their bodies are examined in this daylight and health is a common topic of conversation. They might use the middle of the day to shear some sheep. Often, during the walk home, little bits of kindling will be collected for the fire. Women practise *ayni* by exchanging and sharing daily tasks. Some women regularly take turns herding each other's animals so that days are freed to catch up with household tasks or recover from childbirth. Doña Nieves, her stepmother-in-law, Doña Severina, and her sister-in-law, Doña Filomena, routinely do this.



Figure 7: Midday break during herding.
Doña Nieves has taken the opportunity to spin wool.

Each November, once the crops are in the ground and there is no pressing agricultural work, the men in the families take over the herding for the full month and the women stay at home and weave all day. Mainly woven from the wool of their own animals, weaves, like spun wool and crochets, are another product from the land, another way of transforming the land and doing *llank'ay*. The looms, *sakata*, are set up in the courtyards and new weaves, *awayos*, are created. A new *lijla*, a woman's carrying cloth, and perhaps a new *manta* (cape) are often made, as these see a lot of wear and tear through the year. The men will have new *ponchos* woven for them if needed, and new blankets for the beds will often be made. Blankets are easy to weave as they usually have simple patterns and are made with thicker yarn. The *lijla*, *manta* and *poncho* are exquisitely detailed, each one is unique and demands days and weeks of concentrated effort.



Figure 8: Weaving on the sakata (loom).

Much has been written about the significance of the patterns and the act of weaving itself (Arnold 2006 with Yapita; Cereceda 1986; Crickmay 2002). Doña Nieves told me that some of the patterns she wove were ones her mother had taught her but that others were simply ones she had seen on other women's weaves, on the *ruta*, or in Oruro, and some were inspired by patterns on non-traditional clothing. Many women said they simply made the patterns up as they went along, indeed, I saw *lijlas* with patterns of cars, helicopters and phones. Weaving combines knowledge, creativity and effort. While the lineage of a pattern was never emphasised to me as a key value to the weave or a reflection on its maker, I did learn that weaving well and with speed is important to women. They examine each other's new weaves every year and compare quality and quantity. Doña Vincenta's house appeared as a small weaving workshop as she, Teresa and Nicolás all threaded and prepared the looms. The girls were quick and skilled. They enthusiastically showed me their current productions as well as several made in previous years; as I committed to buying a couple I could see that they eagerly awaited being told

that I might just buy them all. Doña Nieves, on the other hand, never offered to sell me any of her weaves, she needed them all. She complained to me that with three small children she was never given enough uninterrupted time to weave and whilst she had only managed to complete one new weave this year most other women had done three.



*Figure 9: Doña Nieves weaving with her children around her.
In the background an outside oven can be seen.*

At the beginning of December, when the crops are still growing, and no more digging into the ground is necessary, another kind of work resumes; urban labour. As the month of weaving comes to an end the women return to herding and many of the men travel to the towns in search of temporary work. Schools finish for the summer holidays at this time and the older children will often accompany their fathers to the urban centres, mainly in order to make some money but partly because, they say, they are drawn to the urban experience. The relationship between urban paid labour and agricultural labour, *llank'ay*, is discussed in Chapter 6 and 7. During the

summer holidays the teachers leave the rural villages and with the rains causing the collapse and closure of many roads, the NGOs, municipal workers and the *ruta* truck itself are rarely seen. P'iya Qayma is wet and still, populated only by the very old, the very young and women. The storage houses are being exhausted and most meals include *chuñuas* their main ingredient. At this time, as well as herding, the women have to tend to the fields. Unlike in lower-lying villages there is not much need to weed the fields. However, in order to protect the growing potatoes from the frost and from the sun which turns the potato green and leads to the build-up of poisonous solanine, extra earth is piled around each plant. For women, like Doña Nieves, who do not yet have the help of older children and still have to care for very small ones, this can be a very hard time of the year. With the men gone they are left solely responsible for the care of the animals, fields and children. This is where *ayni* becomes crucial to managing the situation. Throughout these months women assist each other by taking turns herding several flocks and working in the fields. Doña Nieves for instance was reliant on her relationships of *ayni* with Doña Severina, her step-mother in-law, Doña Filomena, her sister in-law and Doña Casimira, her maternal cousin.

After the summer holidays end comes the busy period of harvest: March and April. The rains have stopped and as the landscape dries and the sky clears, the cold begins to set in. This time of year is filled with tension for while the potatoes ideally need to remain in the ground for as long as possible there is now a risk of frost at night. On a few of these colder evenings I stayed the night with Don Tomás and Doña Nieves, preferring to do so rather than walking back to my own house. Sleeping in the adjoining hut to the kitchen, I saw how, as the sun rose, both of them stepped outside, smelling the air, feeling the wind on their cheeks and necks, inspecting the tufts of grass on the ground for signs of frost and looking up to the sky in search of clues before walking across the courtyard to collect water for breakfast. Then, one day, one family in the village decides that they cannot wait any longer. They begin to harvest their fields, and before long everyone else follows.

The men have by now returned from the towns hopefully laden with money and urban goods. Every week the *ruta* truck arrives full of people and things. Someone has bought a bicycle, someone else a new straw mattress or a merino sheep and many come back with new tools, new hacks and picks. Everyone has stocked up on coca leaves, for the weeks of harvest are physically demanding, and no one wishes to approach them without a full bag of coca leaves. Coca chewing is bound up in agricultural labour in part due to its physical effects – the mild stimulation, suppression of hunger and pain – in part as marker of break time. It also ritualises the breaks in labour time through the prescribed practices of sharing coca.

As in ploughing and sowing time, the harvest weeks bring everyone out into the fields at the same time. Fields may be owned by families and the produce eaten by the family but the sense of communality created in these moments of the year when people work side by side, hacking into the same hard soil and shielding themselves from the same midday sun, should not be underestimated. Due to the extent and intensity of labour required to harvest all the fields, it is also a time when official communal labour practices are regularly employed in order to ensure that the harvest is completed.

Chuqhu, communal labour

Chuqhu is a pan-Andean concept of communal labour. The following ethnographic piece describes the local manifestation of *chuqhu* and emphasises the shared experiences of the day as key in notions of communality. Communal arrangements, such as *chuqhu*, are filtered through a complex set of principles; including grown men's obligations to their own parents, the rights and responsibilities between fellow *originarios*, and gendered inheritance patterns. This became clear to me one Sunday, towards the end of the potato harvesting season. During the usual gathering and discussions after church, Don Valerio's younger brother Don Pablo Chajhuari Cunorama, from the neighbouring village of Choriparada, turned up. Pablo is the son of Don Gerónimo Chajhuari Mamani (one of the main characters in the *oca* theft, which will be described in Chapter 4) and Doña Máxima

Cunorama Cuyo of P'iya Qayma. Don Gerónimo and Doña Máxima are still alive and working their land. The sections they have passed on to their children are divided between the two brothers. As both of them – Don Valerio and Don Pablo – have wives who have also inherited substantial amounts of land, their families have always had enough. Don Valerio and his wife Doña Juana live in P'iya Qayma and trek to Doña Juana's village only at key agricultural moments. Don Pablo, unlike his brother, has moved to the home village of his wife, Doña Inés: as one of two daughters in a family with no sons, she has inherited vast fields in Choriparada.

That year, Pablo and his wife had been unable to harvest all of their potatoes in Choriparada on their own. By the end of April he was running out of time, the nights were getting colder and the first frost could come at any time. So outside the church that Sunday he asked the people of P'iya Qayma to come the following day and help him harvest his last two fields. What he was proposing was a *chuqhu*. Don Pablo had already requested help from his neighbours in Choriparada, but on the arranged day nobody had turned up. Don Pablo spoke of how his fellow villagers in Choriparada had turned down his request to enter into relationships of obligation with him on the grounds that he was not an *originario* of their village. He was now turning to them, the men and women of P'iya Qayma, his true brothers and sisters in the village where he claimed his origin, to ask for help. The amount of work that needed to be done was considerable and the request for *chuqhu* came at short notice. But, since Don Pablo is an *originario* of P'iya Qayma, everyone was obliged to respond. Yet there was no sense that people begrudgingly accepted the *chuqhu* simply out of obligation; instead there was an atmosphere of excitement at the prospect of a communal work party – the mood was upbeat.

The next morning about 15 people set out from P'iya Qayma. A representative from almost every able family living in the village and present at the time came along. The party included men, women and teenagers. Rosalia, Don Valerio's 15-year-old daughter and Don Pablo's niece, was the

eager representative of her family. On a hillside, just at the outskirts of the village, a small fire was started to signal that the work party was about to set off. As I headed up the hill I saw several of the villagers making their way from their houses towards the fire. When everyone was gathered we started walking. It took us two hours of trekking through rocky terrain to get to Llawini, the site of the sections of fields in Choriparada that we were about to harvest.

The work was hard but spirits were high. We were all wearing hats to protect us from the sun that was beating down on the back of our heads and necks. Many of the younger women had dressed up in their *polleras* rather than wearing their normal *almillas* and several men came dressed in their *tinku* jackets, this resonates with Harris' observation of the festive dress and atmosphere she witnessed during communal work days amongst the Laymi (Harris 2007). Some had brought their own hacks and picks. Using one that is either too short or too long can cause backache and the handles have all been shaped and reshaped to perfectly satisfy the needs of the owners, so working with one's own tools is always the preferred option. Many times I heard comments that working together is always better than working alone: '*Chuqhu, bien es, tukuy llankanchis – mejor de solito llankan – asi es.*' (*Chuqhu* is good, we all work together, it is better than to work on one's own – that is how it is) said Don Tomás. Men, women and teenagers harvested the potatoes. We stood in several rows, hacking at the dry earth. As the potatoes appeared they were thrown into strategically placed baskets. So we hacked, lifted the earth, bent down, recovered the potatoes and threw, and a rhythm emerged. It emanated from the interaction between our bodies, the tools, the furrows and potatoes – the strength of our muscles and bending of backs, the sharpness of the hacks, the density of the soil and the weight and shape of the potatoes. The baskets were regularly emptied by Don Pablo and his family who tipped them into huge cloth bags. The tempo was relentless but the fields were vast and only slowly did the land begin to change colour and shape as the harvested rows began to outnumber the ones still untouched. Often someone would pause and survey how the land was being transformed

with speed at such a grand scale, there were smiles and joyfully people exclaimed – '*bien fuerte llankanchis*' (We are working very well).



Figure 10: Chuqhu in Choriparada.

Don Pablo is emptying the baskets of potatoes onto a sheet, which in turn will be transferred into sacks, such as the one visible on the right hand side of the picture. Note two of the girls in the foreground wearing pollera skirts.

At about 11 o'clock, most of the women went to a corner of the field and started preparing the oven for *papa whatiya* (baked potatoes). They collected firewood and stones to build the mound oven. When the fire had subsided and the rocks were burning hot, they piled potatoes into the oven collapsing the hot rocks on top. The hot rock pile was then covered in sand. During breaks from work the men and women chewed coca and smoked, we talked and laughed. Coca was handed out by Don Pablo and his family but most people brought some of their own as well. Many handfuls were chewed and deposited in cheeks and under upper lips, letting the active ingredient seep

into our bloodstreams and invigorate us. Cigarettes had been brought by some and were shared by all. When the potatoes were baked we all sat down for lunch. The potatoes were dipped in *phasa*, made from a type of mineral-rich, hard clay, which can be found in the local earth. It is ground and mixed with water and salt. A great number of potatoes were consumed during the lunch break, followed by more cigarettes and coca leaves.

Though the work tempo slowed down somewhat after lunch it picked up again in the late afternoon when we were confronted with the possibility of not completing the final field before darkness. The final hour was worked in intent silence. As the sun began to set, the work finally drew to an end and we made our way to the village of Choriparada and Don Pablo and Doña Inés' house. We had harvested all the large fields and now it was time for the hosts to fulfil their end of the bargain, to feed us. Tired and hungry it took us almost an hour to arrive at our destination. By this time it was completely dark. Doña Inés and her female relatives had been preparing food and space had been made for us in a large storage house. We were given furs to sit on and plenty of blankets. The food began to arrive. We were each presented with big bowls of *quinoa* soup followed by plates of *chuñu* and meat, and then big portions of barley soup. The barley soup appeared endless as new full bowls kept appearing, accompanied by the firm insistence that we must all eat up. We all ate an average of three bowls each. Many of the work party exclaimed that they were now full but the food kept coming. We were then presented with large amounts of *chuñu* and meat to take away with us so that our families, too, could partake in the *chuqhu*. Everyone reached for their plastic bags, which they had brought with them for this very purpose. Now being wise to this custom and the possibility it offers of not always having to finish a meal, I too unfolded my own plastic bag. Finally more coca was passed around and chewed, cigarettes lit and shots of alcohol offered by the host couple. The non-drinking Baptists downed the shots without hesitation. Propped up against bags of grains and potatoes, on our furs, under our blankets and with our bellies full, most of us fell asleep and some of us whispered and giggled – there was a deep sense of contentment. Aching

backs and blistered, dry, earth-encrusted hands did not matter so much.

A few hours later, at about 10 o'clock, it was decided we should leave, as there would be duties to attend to back in P'iya Qayma in the morning. Unwillingly we uprooted ourselves from our warm snugs and stepped out into the cold night and a black sky full of stars. Don Pablo and Doña Inés expressed their gratitude many times over. With only a few torches between the 15 of us, the way forward, between the rocks and over the brooks, was impossible to see. The young teenage girls grabbed some of the dry grass that grows in clumps across the highlands and set them on fire. With their flaming torches and long hair flying free, braids having come undone, they ran up ahead setting little bushes on fire as they went to light up our way. And so we walked home, high up in the hills on a path of fire. And I realised now what the snakes of light that I had seen in a distance on the hills at night had been. The going was slow and we stopped several times, lighting up fires to sit around and ward off the cold as we chewed our coca, smoked our cigarettes and rested our aching bodies. At midnight we were home. The physical extremes that one experiences collectively on a day like this – the aches and pains, the blisters, the cold, and the warmth of food and alcohol, the contentment, the energy surge that the coca gives – create a shared identity and an intimacy with fellow workers and a place. The experience of crossing hills, of covering ground on foot and seeing your destination appear in the horizon, of knowing your way home through the night and being so close to the stars, of burning your surroundings to light your path, binds you to that place.

The interaction between people and land on a day like this, based on an intimate knowledge of how to harvest, can be seen as emblematic of *ayllu* life in a broader sense; there are hundreds of kilos of potatoes, tired bodies and blisters, a field that has changed colour, moments to share coca and cigarettes, hours of busy food preparation. There are hungry stomachs that later become full stomachs; there is communal exhaustion and communal satisfaction.

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In May, once the potato harvest is complete, attention is turned to the *quinoa*, *cañawa*, wheat and barley. *Cañawa*, which was the crop grown in the *aynuqa* fields during my stay, is laboriously harvested on hands and knees using little cutting knives, or by simply pulling the plant up with your hands taking care to not bring to much soil along as this will impede the threshing. If too much soil is brought up with the root it needs to be shaken off before the plant can be added to the growing heaps lying on various weaves in the field. Hands become dry and are cut by the spindly bush and occasionally by the cutting knife. Here, it is skills of the fingers and hands that are honed, rather than those of the back and arms, which are needed to harvest potatoes.

After harvest time, the various foodstuffs are treated, transformed or stored to ensure they remain in good condition. The activities involved in the transformation of crops are extensions of the transformation of the fields, these efforts are also *llank'ay*. *Cañawa* and *quinoa* both demand special treatment and attention in order to make them edible. Both plants are threshed to loosen the grain from the bush. This is done outside on big rocky surfaces using long wooden poles. The poles are heavy and very unwieldy. Threshing is a favourite activity of the adolescent boys who have just gained the strength to control the poles and the mastery to use them well. They show off to their peers, particularly the female ones and to the younger boys who desperately want to be given a chance. Both *quinoa* and *cañawa* are then ground using the communal village watermill or the smaller hand driven, stone mills which most households own. After this initial grinding process, husks are separated from the grain through winnowing, the grain is poured from a height between containers so that the wind catches the husks and only the nutritious kernels land in the container on the ground. Both are ground a second time. Hours of aching arms turning the stone mill produces only a small bag of ground *quinoa* or *cañawa*. The *cañawa* is now a very fine powder that can be used for making *pito*. Before *quinoa* can be consumed it must be

thoroughly washed to remove the coating of bitter tasting saponins (mildly toxic glycosides). The process is laborious and involves soaking them with water and scrubbing the kernels together. Whilst there is still saponin in the water it appears soapy, foams up and much of the *quinoa* floats to the top, the water is changed several times whilst the scrubbing continues, hands getting colder and redder. Doña Nieves explained to me that once there are no floating *quinoa* kernels on the surface of the water, the job is done.

Potatoes, while not requiring to be made edible in the same way, need processing for the purposes of storage. Fewer than half the potatoes harvested in a year are actually consumed and stored in their original state. About a fifth are kept for seed for next year's planting and half is used to make freeze-dried potato, *chuño*. There are many different types of potato, some are particularly suitable for making *chuño*, for instance *papa loke*, others are better suited for soups, boiling, frying or baking. Every family will grow their own preferred combinations of types. Those which are stored as potatoes are kept packed away in bags in storehouses, but due to lack of space, potatoes which are put aside to make *chuño* are usually stored under mounds of earth outside. This storage method is not a long-term solution; they will be transformed into *chuño* within about 2 months of being harvested, in June when the nights freeze.

The dehydrated *chuño* takes up a fraction of the room needed to store fresh potatoes and will be kept in this state with the other potatoes in the storehouses. *Chuño* has been key to survival in the highlands for hundreds of years (Valladolid Rivera 1998). Once dehydrated, it can be stored for up to 30 years and provides protection against the disaster of a failed crop – or even several. It is also a safe way of storing wealth as it retains its exchange value in contrast to the Bolivian currency, the *boliviano*, which has historically been very unstable (Klein 2003).

To make *chuño*, the potatoes are spread out on the ground, doused with water and then left to freeze through the night. In the morning they defrost in

the strong sun. They are then gathered into piles and trampled by bare feet. The process is repeated for several nights until the potatoes are completely free of water and turn hard and black. To *pisar* (Sp) (trample) *chuñuis* not difficult, but to do it well does demand practice. The dehydrating potatoes are cold and slippery between your toes as the peel comes off and the water is squeezed out. After only an hour of trampling my feet were freezing and soon covered in blisters and I had to make a concerted effort to keep my balance and not fall over into a sea of potatoes. I spent a day with an elderly couple, Don Emeterio, known affectionately as *abuelito*,⁶⁴ (little grandfather) and Doña Augustina. Both in their 80s, they were trampling the potatoes with such efficiency and speed that my efforts appeared almost pointless. Between sessions of trampling, we sat on our knees and, bent over the piles of soft potatoes, we removed any remaining peel. During these days of trampling most men, including the aged *abuelito*, sleep outside next to their piles of *chuñuto* protect them from being consumed by roaming hungry animals. As the nights are some of the coldest of the year, often dropping to minus 10 degrees Celsius, they build little makeshift shelters and roll themselves up in many blankets so as not to freeze; plenty of coca, alcohol and cigarettes are also in use to help make the experience bearable. Like weaving, making *chuñuis* part of the process of transforming the earth and the *llank'ay* to do so demands intense physical engagement with the materials of the earth. As the cold winter months set in, and the agricultural year draws to an end, the earth appears barren and dry, but inside the homes it is a time of abundance – the storehouses filled from the recent harvests – and the meals rich with fresh potatoes.

Conclusion

We have completed a full year. Throughout the seasons the people of P'iya Qayma have transformed the land around them and 'made the earth bear fruit' (Harris 2000). Agricultural labour is central to life, the relentless transformation of land and concomitant creation of the own body fills every

⁶⁴ He is referred to as *abuelito* by most villagers. *Abuelo* (sp) means grandfather, the diminutive ending demonstrates affection and is very common in Bolivia.

day. Overall, then, the landscape in P'iya Qayma can be seen as an instance of Ingold's 'taskscape'. Everywhere you turn the land is used and considered, incorporated into the continual production of all the things needed to support the village and its people: a lookout point from where to see the llama flock; the sheltered rock faces where *quinoa* and *cañawa* can be threshed; the river that turns the little mill, and so on. This taskscape is produced through *llank'ay*, which transforms the land, and in this taskscape the skills and relationships of people are developed. Throughout the months and over the years children become skilled adults and 'real' people, *runa*. Their development, the moulding of their bodies and honing of their abilities, as well as the substances they take in, and the weather and geography they are exposed to, links them to a specific locality, their village, *ayllu* and taskscape. Both women and men are moulded and valued by the labour which transforms the land. This taskspace is temporalised; the names of places in the area are a constant reminder that the village and surrounding fields have been dwelt in for many generations previous to the present inhabitants. Just as the taskspace is constructed in material and over time, so is the human body and *runahood*. The same is true for social relationships which only through sustained time and the knowledge of others' ability to perform *llank'ay*, develop into significant bonds on which reciprocal labour practices, such as *ayni* and *chuqhu*, or arrangements of marriage and *compadrazgo*, depend, in turn these relationships enable the tasks of the year to be completed on time and regenerates the work force. These points will be further developed as the thesis progresses.

Chapter 4: The practice of *llank'ay* – *Runa-hood* and access to land

In the previous world epoch, I was told, there was no sun, only the moon, and people did not need to work, since everything they needed, including clothes, grew miraculously of its own accord. The rising of God, manifest in the dawning sun, inaugurated the present age, the 'age of the Christians'. The Christian God gave the new people raw materials to work on: the 'three miracles' of food-plants, livestock and metals, and it is as Christians that they identify themselves as hard workers. Work, then, in the Andean genesis is presented as a form of blessing and well-being

Harris 2007:159

While the previous chapter ended by describing the festivity and pleasure experienced during communal labour, I again wish to emphasise that I do not want to portray agricultural work in the Andean highlands as simply joyous or as something perceived solely as a blessing. Work is physically demanding, life in the *ayllu* is precarious, and, as Chapter 7 will describe, many people leave the rural areas and its hardships for urban homes. *Llank'ay* is nonetheless experienced as having positive productive powers and intimately connected to the essence of being human, *runa*.

This chapter is divided into two sections, the first discusses the role of *llank'ay* in the development of personhood, arguing that agricultural labour is integral to the construction of a fully socialised person, a *runa*. The second section analyses the tension between practice and rule in land claims. The interaction of the two is illustrated through the ethnographic account of an *oca* theft. In the example given, sustained practice trumps rules, but normative structures also matter, and the power of practice has to be

negotiated through them.

Llank'ay and runa-hood

In Quechua and Aymara-speaking Andean regions a non-*ayllu* person who lives in town and does not work the land is referred to as *q'ara* (or *q'ala* in Peruvian Quechua) – the term means naked and bare (noted in Aymara by Abercrombie 1998; Bigenho 2001; Canessa 1998; Harris 2007; Rasnake 1988; noted in Quechua by Gose 1994; Isbell 1978; Van Vleet 2008; Weismantel 2001). The naked and bare person is one who is not *runa*, who has not developed her personhood in accordance with *ayllu* life and sociality. As Gose puts it – '*Q'ala* and *misti* denote a fundamental lack of the kind of sociability that characterises *runa* as true human beings' (1994:22).⁶⁵ And as Allen claims, 'only *runakuna* live in *ayllus*' (1988: 33). In reference to the myth quoted at the beginning of the chapter, Abercrombie and Dillon (1988: 67) argue that the story defines fully social people, *runa*, in opposition to the people of the pre-solar, pre-domestication age. These non-farming communities, who had not yet received the blessings of the 'three miracles' and become workers, are the original *q'arakuna*. These non-workers lived in dark moist places where foodstuffs were self-generating and time did not exist – there was no change between day and night or the seasons (Abercrombie and Dillon 1988). Harris describes the despising attitude which indian peasants have towards outsiders who:

'do not know how to work' and who live by begging from them – for this is how they perceive the exactions of mestizos. They even feel sorry for these people who have little or no land, who are afraid of real work, and who depend on others to produce food for them. Mestizos for this Indian perspective are individuals who have lost their identity.

Harris 1995a: 369

The term *q'ara* is used to refer to white and *mestizo* people who very obviously do not, and never have, displayed an indigenous identity or lived a

⁶⁵ *Misti*: from the Spanish *mestizo*. Used by indigenous people, often in a derogatory sense, to describe the ethnically mixed majority, urban population.

rural life, but it also applies to people who are darker skinned, used to live in *ayllu* and have migrated to the city, and to the children of these people (Canessa 2012, 1998). As the section on ethnicity and identity in the Introduction explained, these are highly relational categories and whilst they are sometimes spoken about in terms of blood, descent and race, they are in fact constructed mainly through practice, meaning that they can be both developed and lost (Canessa 2006b, 1998). Canessa (1998) and Abercrombie (1998) both emphasise practice over substance in the creation of personhood; practices that involve actions within the world and relations with others, both human and extra-human. *Ayllu* personhood is conceived of as processual by people in P'iya Qayma themselves. The image of the journey from an 'empty state' to a 'full state' is prevalent in the local language and cosmology. Even the Quechua verb 'to know,' *yachay*, can be used to illustrate the model of personhood. *Yachay* can etymologically be broken down into the parts *ya*, which means crossing a boundary, and *cha* which denotes arrival and has to do with reaching a state of completeness (Itier 1993 cited in Howard 2002); to learn, to gain in knowledge and experience, is to complete oneself.

There is a consensus that *ayllu* personhood is viewed as superior to 'q'arahood' by *ayllu* inhabitants, and that it is developed through practice. Crucial to any understanding of this process is the investigation into what specific practice makes *runakuna* (socialised people). *Runa-hood* is often described, measured and reflected through the *cargo* system, both by scholarly writers (e.g. Goodale 2001; McNeish 2001; Rasnake 1988) and local inhabitants. The social obligations of the *cargo* system include taking up the mantle of the local authority roles and sponsoring *fiestas*. People – particularly men – travel through the *cargo* system on a journey to become complete human beings, *runakuna*. When moving through the *cargo* system personhood is partly shaped through the social interactions with other humans. The essays in Canessa's edited volume 'document this process of identity formation taking place in and through social intercourse' (Weismantel 2005: 182). But while personhood is partly developed through

participation in the *cargo* system and relationships with other humans, it is also brought to bear through the social interaction with non-humans: specifically with land (Allen 1988), when contextual worldly substances create a certain body, both through ingestion (Van Vleet 2008; Weismantel 1988, 1995, 2001) and the physical work it demands of a person (Weismantel 2001). This thesis investigates the place and perception of agricultural work, *llank'ay*, in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí. *Llank'ay* is the activity which transforms land. The process of transformation is an interplay between land and people which creates many of the resources needed for *ayllu* life and, as this chapter will discuss, this interplay also creates a certain kind of people, sets of social relations and values. Work makes you a physical, skilled and knowledgeable *runa* bound up in necessary social relationships. All of these things enable access to land and allow you to work land well which in turn reinforces your claim to land and thus ability to perform *llank'ay*. In this way *llank'ay* and *runa-hood* are mutually reinforcing and interdependent.

Just as Canessa argues that continued engagement with the land is key to retaining *jaq'i* personhood, the process of learning to work the land in a productive and effective manner is crucial to the process of becoming a person, a *runa*, in the first place. When a child is born he/she is like a wild animal (Abercrombie 1998: 335). As a child grows his/her tasks change and knowledge of working practices are accumulated. Small children, from the time they can walk, are taught to herd, first sheep, then llamas. They learn to identify the family herd and the herds belonging to all the other families in the village and often the surrounding villages by following their parents in their work and their conversations, and by being asked to participate in tasks from a very young age. A young child might for instance be asked to locate a lost sheep. After a few failed expeditions during which she/he was not able to identify the lost sheep, she/he quickly learns to pay attention to the individuals in the family flock. In having paid attention to how sheep may be differentiated, she/he can then easily familiarise her/himself with animals belonging to other families. Three-year-old Zulma, for example, was correctly

able to separate her aunt Doña Filomena's animals from those of her step-grandmother, Doña Severina.

Through the hours that young children spend herding with their mothers they become intimately familiar with the lands surrounding the village. They learn about the fields and grazing grounds, their names and uses, those belonging to the family and the communal ones, and so will also gain knowledge of kinship ties, and present land practice. This early familiarisation with the surrounding land initiates the young child into the taskscape. By the time children start school they have visited and spent time in all the land pertaining to the village. As soon as a younger sibling is born a child is ousted from its mother's back and begins to undertake all the journeys on foot. Two- and three-year-old girls and boys walk miles every day, wading through brooks, climbing up rocks and running through fields. The older children (from around the age of seven) begin practising the agricultural tasks, to harvest the potatoes, barley, *quinoa* and *cañawa*, and learn how to transform these into food. As the teenagers learn to thresh, they are taught how to handle the long pole, to control their muscles, build up a sense of balance, and grow aware of how the plants and kernels move and come loose from each other.

Each agricultural task mastered brings a person closer to mastering total life, to being able to make all the lands and all the animals, as well as themselves productive. The young teenage boys learn to plough and the girls to weave and cook. The accumulation of knowledge and experience of agricultural tasks, along with responsibilities in the *cargo* system and ritual events, facilitates the journey through the pathway of life, *thaki*. The body is moulded, muscles are grown and stretched, eyes learn to see and ears to hear. Canessa (2012:146) has also pointed to the embodied identity of these cultivators – their short stature due to nutritional deficiencies, dark skin from a life-time in the sun and their lean bodies shaped by physical activity.

Acquired knowledge and hard work will make the earth produce better. This

may appear a self-evident point, but the reality of the matter was only really driven home to me when I realized that I did not possess the skills and was unable to work hard enough. When I was unable to sow barley seeds effectively, when after many hours of harvesting potatoes I had only cleared a couple of furrows, when I burnt the *quinoa* whilst toasting it, and countless other times when my efforts did not measure up, it became clear to me that a certain kind of embodied person needs to be developed if the land is to be worked well. It might seem obvious that a well-ploughed field and spaced seeds will produce better; that knowledge, skill and hard work affects how the land will produce for you. Clearly any area of expertise can only be mastered through practice; the fact that my agricultural efforts were far inferior to those of the inhabitants of P'iya Qayma came as no surprise. But what is notable here are two things. Firstly, my lack of skill and lack of practice rendered me a *q'ara*, rather than just an inefficient labourer. Pedro teasingly called me *gringa* and *q'ara* as the uneven barley grew and Doña Casimira encouraged me with the promise of soon becoming a *runa* when I practised the tasks she set me. And, secondly, a *runa* who knows how to make the land produce is obliged to transform that land in order to retain her *runa-hood*. So *runa-hood* is not simply about accumulating knowledge, but also about the continual utilization of that knowledge, through the practice of agricultural tasks which transform the land. It is about constantly putting your *runa* skills and abilities to productive use and thereby acknowledging and appreciating the miracles and blessings of 'food-plants and livestock.'

Canessa (2012), drawing on Henrietta Moore's work (2007) as well as aspects of Judith Butler's (1993), describes *jaq'i* (*runa*) identity as iterative. Describing identities as iterative makes us view their creation as a result of many small, often unconscious and non-instrumental acts. This avoids invoking notions of performativity (Butler 1990) which draw attention to ritual events. This is an effective way of describing the process through which the everyday practice of *llank'ay* creates *runakuna*. It is of course also true, however, that there are moments when *llank'ay* is consciously performed in order to develop *runa-hood*, for instance, when young adults publicly display

newly mastered skills in order to cement their burgeoning *runa-hood*.

In focusing on *llank'ay* as an activity which has transformative powers I identify productivity with a process rather than only with people or only with the land. As a process, it entails interactions with both. The power of physical activity in the creation of identity and community in the Andes has also been discussed by Lazar (2008) and Bigenho (2001). In her work on citizenship in El Alto, Lazar argues the importance of bodily movement in dance, to the processes of community building, and the development of embodied skills and – ultimately – a fulfilled person (Lazar 2008: 118-143). Similarly, I stress the physicality of agricultural labour in the creating of belonging and identity. Bigenho and Lazar are both describing performances, and while agricultural labour is not a performance in the way that dancing in a parade is, or, as in the case of Bigenho's study, taking part in a musical show, it is also a shared physical experience which roots people to a place. In Lazar's case the place is a neighbourhood and the physical performances root people to a community, that is, to other people. In my case it also roots people to the very land on which they physically act. I argue that people move from their un-socialised infant state to an adult state of *runa-hood* through agricultural labour. During practice within the 'taskscape,' by 'doing' *llank'ay* the person grows with skills, experience and knowledge, and so moves along the pathway of life, *thaki*.

Access and rights to land

This chapter has so far focused on the links between practice and personhood, showing how agricultural work, *llank'ay*, creates *runa-hood*. Chapter 1 and 2, on the other hand, detailed many of the 'rules' and hierarchical structures that characterise life in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí. These two aspects – the experiential and the structured – are of course closely connected. This second half of Chapter 4 discusses the relationship between practice on the one hand and regulated life on the other, and shows how people negotiate between them – how *runakuna* gain and secure access to the land they work in order to fulfil their *runa-hood*. The following

ethnography demonstrates how claims to land are in part governed by official *ayllu* rules on land management and inheritance, but that long-term sustained engagement with land, and a special relationship with it, are important considerations in awarding access to that land.

After I had investigated usufruct and inheritance regimes of land in several different villages in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, it became clear to me that there was considerable variation between villages and families. And whilst the land is legally owned by the community, claims to land were mainly negotiated through the family and only occasionally did the whole community and the authority figures weigh in on decisions regarding a person's right to a piece of land. This seems to suggest that it makes no sense to speak of an overarching regime at all. However, some general stated and implicit *ayllu* rules exist. A person's claim to family fields and the communal, *aynuqa* fields, are in theory established through a combination of descent and fulfilled social obligations.

Descent and Inheritance

The nuclear family is the core unit of the *ayllu* and a majority of available land passes from parents to children, along the male line, from father to son. Daughters may inherit from their fathers, but usually only when the father has no sons or when those sons are unavailable or unsuitable; for example because of out-migration or poor health. Daughters' descendants enjoy dwindling rights, connected to the loss of the mother's surname after a generation. These private and often flexible inheritance practices appear to be the main way of gaining access to land in the present day. Similar practices were in place historically throughout the Andes; inheritance during the Inka times within the *ayllu*, for example, passed from parents to children through the male line as private property; only when there was no one to inherit did land pass to the *ayllu* which then distributed it within the community (Harris 2000).

How children inherit from their parents varies between families. Don Tomás,

who has inherited a substantial amount of land as a result of his uncles declining their shares, plans to give all his children, irrespective of gender, equal shares of the land. Don Tiburcio, on the other hand, has rather different ideas. His intentions regarding his two daughters and four sons encompass a differentiation on the grounds of gender. Since his own father, Don Basilio, is still alive and working much of his land, he has yet to come into his full inheritance. When that eventually happens, he plans to give his daughters Teresa and Nicolás a small amount of land each; leaving them to live mainly from their husbands' land. The rest he will divide between his four sons.

Within a family, then, a person's claim depends largely on the specific situation and held beliefs of that family. Don Tomás emphasises that every family makes its own choices and deals. And sometimes an individual's choices are made as a result of the knock-on effects from those of others. He still has land in Coyuma from his mother but has decided to decline his right to it as there are many relatives in Coyuma sharing a small amount of land and he has plenty of land in P'iya Qayma to work. But he admits that if any of his uncles' children or grandchildren came to claim some of the land he was working in P'iya Qayma, he might have to go to Coyuma and reclaim his mother's land there. The variation in inheritance practices between families is evident and there is no hard and fast rule that needs to be adhered to, instead need and ability play a role in determining who works what land and how land is divided.

A family's claim to land within the community is based on descent and hinges around *originario* surnames. Each *ayllu* village is usually made up of a majority of families with *originario* surnames. These are the families imagined to be original proprietors/custodians of that land. In reality, however, the *originario* status is not proof of the historical presence of a family in an area, and this is something that is openly acknowledged by people in P'iya Qayma. Studies of *originario* surnames conclude that they tell us very little about where a person's ancestors came from or who 'originally' lived on a piece of land (Saignes 1995). During periods of intense rural

taxation it was the category of *originario* that was hit the hardest, and people would move in and out of names depending on what might benefit them, or in order to help them escape a difficult situation. In P'iya Qayma, Chajhuari, Chui and Veizaga are the three *originario* surnames and almost every man and child in the village holds one of these names. Up until two decades ago, two other *originario* families also lived in the village, the Díaz and Condori families. These two surnames still appeared on the list of *jilanqos* and *dirigentes*, albeit now crossed out, and the previous presence of the families in the P'iya Qayma was confirmed to me many times by several different villagers.⁶⁶

Returning to the three *originario* surnames: there are at present two unrelated families named Veizaga in P'iya Qayma, both of whom claim *originario* status. Don Tomás told me the story of how the two families came to bear the name Veizaga. Originally, one of them was named Choque. About a hundred years ago there were two young lovers in the area who wanted to get married. They were both surnamed Choque. The boy was from P'iya Qayma and the girl from Coyuma. As two people with the same surname may not marry, the boy changed his name to Veizaga. He chose the name as he had some Veizaga blood in him on his maternal side and the name had *originario* status in P'iya Qayma, although no one bearing the name was at the time working land in the village. The young lovers could then be married and one of the local Veizaga families was founded/re-founded. The other Veizaga family, the one Don Tomás belongs to, came from Cliza, a town in the Cochabamba valley, and originally had a different surname. Upon migrating to the area they adopted the name due to its *originario* status. They stepped into the *originario* names almost as if they were a title, and their claim to land as *originarios* is at present not questioned. Whatever the historical accuracy of Don Tomás' retelling of events, it illustrates a flexible attitude towards *originario* names.

⁶⁶ Proving oneself an *originario* of P'iya Qayma requires not only bearing one of these surnames but also being able to show legitimate enough descent from P'iya Qayma. These surnames are all fairly common in Bolivia, and clearly not everyone bearing them will qualify.

A similar fluidity of autochthonous status is demonstrated in a destruction myth of ancient Kirkiyawí. It was during my second week in the village of Bolívar that I was told the story of *Kirkiyawí, la ciudad perdida* (the lost city). The caretaker and general handy man at the *alcaldía* office, Don Clemente, invited me to join him in a visit to the village of Yarvicoya where they were hosting a big sports day for all the schools in the municipality that weekend. On the path to Yarivcoya we suddenly began driving through a very odd landscape, it was made up of hundreds of perfect triangular mounds of sand, each measuring around ten meters high and with diameters of twenty to thirty meters. Don Clemente saw me staring out the window and with a sweeping gesture said 'this is the lost city.' He began to tell me the story. Buried in the mounds lay the original city of Kirkiyawí, it was the first and, during its existence, only inhabited place in the area. One night an old man was passing through the city and it happened that on that very evening the city was hosting a great party. However, nobody in the whole of Kirkiyawí offered the old man food or drink, or invited him into their homes. Calamitously for the city folk, the old man was in fact a god, and infuriated by the lack of hospitality he had encountered he destroyed all the houses, killing every last one of the inhabitants of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, leaving only the sand hills in place of the once prosperous city. There are claims that evidence of the dead has been found in the mounds, such as long strands of hair and the sandal of a child. I asked Don Clemente to clarify for me the relationship between the inhabitants of old Kirkiyawí and the inhabitants of present day Kirkiyawí. He told me that all those who had lived in the old city had been lost and the current inhabitants of the area have come from all over the place. So people in Kirkiyawí do not imagine themselves as the first and only people of the area, or as having some fixed place of origin.

This destruction myth is very similar to the ones told in many places in the Andes as a metaphor for the Christian conversion. The dawning of the Christian sun wipes out the non-Catholic population, bar a small group of *Uru* people who escape by diving into lake Poopó, and the new Christians who are

born to work the land in the sun are wholly disconnected from the previous population/previous selves (Abercrombie & Dillon 1988:50; Harris 2006:71). Determining whether the myth of the lost city in Kirkiyawí is really about Christian conversion, or something else entirely, is not the aim of this analysis, instead I want to draw attention to the fact that the story of the lost city includes an image of fragmented lineages and a history of migration.

Despite such stories of fluid and changeable origins, being from the outside can have some disadvantages when it comes to land access. Again, much depends on the specific circumstances. Most villages have *forasteros* (outsiders, strangers) who have reduced rights to land.⁶⁷ In P'íya Qayma there was only one such family, Don Victor Mamani Tola and his wife Doña Valeriana Chui Ramos. Don Victor was born in the nearby village of Coyuma and Doña Valeriana is originally from P'íya Qayma. When they first began their life together as a couple they lived in Coyuma with Don Victor's family, as is customary. However, there was a scarcity of land in Don Victor's family and, as Doña Valeriana had inherited a reasonable section of land from her father, they decided that they should set up their household in P'íya Qayma. Although they have land to work, they are excluded from the *aynuqa* fields as their household is not counted as an *originario* household, and so find it hard to survive on the crops they can produce. This was one explanation offered to me for why Don Victor spent much of his time in Oruro labouring for a wage. As Doña Valeriana belongs to the Chui family of P'íya Qayma she is embedded in networks of kin and *compadrazgo*, which are factors, alongside friendship, in building relationships of *ayni* with fellow villagers. So while they are excluded from the *aynuqa* fields, they have family fields and the ability to make use of *ayni*. Their situation is very similar to that of Don Pablo and Doña Inés in Choriparada, except that Doña Inés had access to far more land than Doña Valeriana, which meant that their exclusion from *aynuqa* land mattered less. But they, too, still suffered the exclusion from certain communal rights as, due to Don Pablo's *forastero* status, they were not able to summon a *chuqhu* in Choriparada.

⁶⁷ *Forastero* is legal fiscal category created during the colonial period (see Saignes 1995)

On the one hand, Don Victor and Doña Valeriana are denied access to *aynuqa* land in P'iya Qayma on the basis that he is not an *originario*; on the other hand, Don Tomás openly admits that his family adopted or 'stepped into' the *originario* name, and the destruction myth of old Kirkiyawí effectively renders all present inhabitants of the *ayllu* as *forasteros*. So there is adherence to the rules in the short term, resulting in the exclusion of Don Victor and Don Pablo, but a measure of flexibility in the rules over time, allowing for the eventual absorption of non-*originarios* as legitimate claimants. While every family is convinced of its legitimate claim to land, they do not believe that this claim is predicated on belonging to an unbroken line of *originario* ancestors who worked the very same land. People in Kirkiyawí see themselves as *originarios* in a general sense. They are *runa*, meaning those who work the land, in relation to non-*ayllu*, *q'ara*, people. As such they have a close and legitimate relationship with land in the highlands in general, but mobility is built into their sense of history. They readily acknowledge the creation myth, which effectively de-legitimises the claim to having lived on the land since time immemorial. The ability to create legitimacy in the period of a few generations of working the land indicates, in my view, that it is agricultural activity, *llank'ay*, rather than descent, which is the lynchpin in the claim to land.

If you carry an *originario* surname and your family has worked the land before you, your claim to that land is fairly strong. People who leave the village retain the right to return and work land in the village as long as they continue to fulfil communal obligations. However, while they do not forgo the right to their land they are at risk of losing their *runa-hood* as will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

Differential rights of descent through mothers and fathers are linked to naming practices. In Bolivia, as elsewhere in Latin America and Spain, children receive two surnames; one from each parent, however, the maternal lines are cut short and they therefore have weaker claims. The father's name

is placed first, after the given name. When people go on to have their own children, they pass on only their father's name, the first surname. This surname will be combined with the child's other parent's paternal surname. The husband's paternal surname will be placed first, followed by the wife's paternal surname. Thus, this system drops *originario* claims through the maternal line over the following generation: a woman's grandchildren will not carry her surname whilst a man's grandchildren will. Daughters have a right to their father's lands but, like surnames, this travels only one generation down.

Don Tomás' wife Doña Nieves, for example, carries the paternal surname Ramos. She is from the neighbouring village of Vila Victoria where Ramos is an *originario* name. She still has rights to her father's land there. Don Tomás and Doña Nieves' children, Zulma, Israel and David, bear the twin surnames Veizaga Ramos. But none of their children will bear the name Ramos, and so their claim to the Ramos land in Vila Victoria will be lost. In the case of Don Victor and Doña Valeriana, the claim to Chui land in P'iya Qayma will not devolve upon their grandchildren (unless, like one of the Veizaga families, they too change their names). These grandchildren could, instead, feasibly return to Coyuma and there reclaim the land associated with one of their surnames.

The inheritance of animals, incidentally, is mainly governed by different customs and principles to that of land. Sheep and llamas are devolved through the female line, from mothers to daughters. They can also be passed from one female affine to another: from a mother-in-law to her daughter-in-law. Herding is primarily the job of women and the flocks are seen to be theirs. They have been trained to look after the animals, to herd and shear, beckon and drive them. Considered the natural carers of the animals, they also enjoy a level of ownership. Most of the sheep from Don Tomás and Doña Nieves' flock were identified as Doña Nieves' sheep and only a few merino sheep which Don Tomás had purchased in town are his. When slaughtered, the sheep were, however, consumed by the family as a whole; and when one

was sold the money belonged not to Doña Nieves but to the family unit. It is thus only at the moment of inheritance that the question of ownership becomes important. The fact that the animals are passed down to daughters and daughters-in-law offers an element of security to women.

We return to the question of access to land. While descent constitutes one important means to claim entitlement, it exists alongside a second principle based on social obligation. Many of these social obligations are expressed through the *cargo* system. Through these, a man or woman is constituted as a being that possesses the knowledge and experience to work the land and contribute to society. A person who can claim descent but has not fulfilled his/her social obligations, due perhaps to periods spent away from the village, is said to be obliged to pay a *multa* (fine) to the *ayllu* in order to regain access to land. I was never given an approximate amount of what someone might have to pay, there was no set sum but everyone ensured me that such a fine would be considerable. Nobody, however, knew of any situation when an *originario* who had lived away had returned to claim his land after decades or generations.

Social Obligations

In addition to descent, fulfilled social obligations are, in theory, crucial to the right to claim, retain, and access land in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí. These social obligations include participating in the *cargo* system by shouldering authority posts, liaising with NGOs and sponsoring *fiestas*, as well as performing communal labour.

The *cargo* system was during the 1960s and 1970s studied through a Maussian-derived functionalist-materialist perspective. These described the system of rotating responsibilities of power and *fiestas* as a system of redistribution and delayed reciprocity which in turn bound communities together and awarded prestige (see Buechler and Buechler 1971; Carter 1964; Stein 1961). Motivated by a desire to move beyond these themes towards a more complete analysis of the *cargo* system which not only

described how it functioned but also what it contained – the specifics of rituals, the role of saints and sacred beings and the work performed by the authority roles appointed through the *cargo* system – Abercrombie's work (1998) marked a move to explore the creative powers of the *cargo* system. In particular, Abercrombie links the *cargo* system – which in the case of his fieldsite, canton K'ulta, is made up of alternate years of *fiesta* sponsorship and alternate years of 'civil' posts and periods of rest – with pathways which embody historical memories. As a person travels along his pathway, *thaki*, he 'remembers' his history. In P'iya Qayma the alternation between civil roles and responsibilities of *fiesta* sponsorship did not mix in such a regular way. This is partly because the practice of *fiestas* has been overturned with the Protestant conversion, and the *fiestas* that did occur, such as *Todos Santos*, tended to be sponsored by those families who had recently lost a member rather than according to fair turns. As has been described in Chapter 1, the civil roles do, however, rotate between the villagers in a highly prescribed way.

As described in Chapter 1, not all leadership positions in Kirkiyawí can be accessed through the *cargo* system, instead, we find a mix; the positions of *jilanqo* and *kuraj tatas* are meted out through the *cargo* system, the attributes necessary to become a *mallku* are also nurtured and assessed within the *cargo* system but ultimately the top roles within *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, that of *cacique* and *mallku*, are not conferred based on a system of rotation. Instead, the former is an inherited position and the latter, attained depending to several factors including: desire/willingness of candidate, perceived merit and probably a mixture of other obscured factors such as personal ties and availability, all play their part.

Non-*ayllu* authority roles included in the *cargo* system are the union representatives such as *dirigente*, government appointments like the *agente cantonal*, and municipal functions like being a member of the school board. Such roles even include those in regular cooperation's with NGOs, by people often simply referred to as *líderes* or *promotores*. As P'iya Qayma is a Baptist

village, the *cargo* system also includes the role of *diakon* (deacon) the person who is in charge of the church facilities and runs the services. The *ayllu* roles are hierarchical and one is only considered for the office of *kuraj tata* once one has successfully completed a year as a *jilanqo*. But many of the municipal functions and those that involve working with NGOs are governed more by convenience, personality and connections than by a strictly hierarchical circulation of roles.

Upon reaching adulthood and establishing a household of his own, a person is expected to begin fulfilling social obligations. His name is added to the list which administers the *cargo* roles. The same piece of paper has been used in P'iya Qayma for many years. Don Tomás showed me the list and pointed to the name of his dead father, still printed on the paper. As mentioned, criteria of eligibility for the *jilanqo* include being a married man with an established household, and being an *originario* of the village who is working the land. In reality, however, these rules are not adhered to, at least not in P'iya Qayma. Don Benito, who acted as *dirigente* for a time during my stay, was one of the few single men in the village. In a village like P'iya Qayma where out-migration is high and the people available to shoulder the *cargos* are few, it is unsurprising that rules regarding who can do what have been relaxed. It is also possible, however, that the rules were never strict but always a statement of ideals. Even in a village full of married men, Don Benito, being a competent and experienced man, might well have been included in the list of eligible men independent of these circumstances.

Shouldering a *cargo* involves a certain amount of work. Every month the *jilanqo* attends an *ayllu* meeting in the village of *Wallata Waycha*, the home of the *cacique*, although often the meeting is moved to either the more accessible village of *Llaytani* or the main village of Bolívar. The *dirigente* will attend regular meetings in either the *sub-central* to which the village belongs or in the *central* – the village of Bolívar. The *alcaldía* organises bi-monthly meetings discussing all ongoing projects in the area, both the *jilanqo* and the

dirigente attend these meetings. Going to any of these meetings usually entails at least a day, and often two days, of traveling on foot and remaining away from your land and animals.

The extent to which women take up these authority roles varies. At first sight it might appear that there is a distinction between the more traditional structures – the *ayllu* and union, for example – and the newer organisation – the municipality or NGOs – and that the former is almost exclusively a male domain while the latter is mixed. However, this would not be completely accurate. The female presence within the union is very strong and the Bartolina Sisa National Federation of Peasant Women is an active force within the region. Within the *ayllu* authority structure women are less visible. Though it is often said in Kirkiyawí that the actual responsibility – the *cargo* – rests with the couple, not just the man, wives were rarely involved in the activities of their husbands when working as *jilancos*, either in public or in the home.

A large aspect of the *cargo* system is *fiesta* sponsorship. The *fiesta cargo* system, as it is known in the literature, has been extensively studied, and much emphasis has been placed on how *fiestas*, and drinking in general, function as social ‘glue’ (see Abercrombie 1998; Allen 1988; Carter and Mamani 1989; Van Vleet 2011). As the population of P’iya Qayma is now uniformly Baptist, however, the *fiesta cargo* system appears very different in this setting. The whole village still marks important events in the calendar such as *Todos Santos* (All Hallows’ Eve) and Easter, with communal events focused around meals and Bible readings. Members of the community take turns sponsoring these *fiestas*, but with the alcohol and extravagant extras taken out of the equation these are now far less costly affairs and as such do not create the same expectations of delayed reciprocity. While in the Catholic villages of Bolívar *fiestas* would go on for several days, with sound systems and big bands brought in from the nearby towns to entertain the coca- and alcohol-fuelled participants, in P’iya Qayma the events lasted only one day

and evening. Although not overly solemn, they were subdued. Regardless of excess or restraint, non-participation in the *cargo* system halts personal development and makes full personhood an impossible accomplishment. More importantly for the present argument, doing one's share in sponsoring *fiestas* is part of the communal obligation, and avoidance could lead to restricted access to land. How, and to what extent, this would happen in principle would be decided by *ayllu* authorities.

An important aspect of the social obligation placed on all village members is that of taking part in non-agricultural communal work days. These are often related to projects that the *alcaldía* or NGOs run in the area. The general formula for these projects is that the organisation provides materials and sometimes expertise – perhaps in the form of an engineer or veterinarian – and the villagers provide the labour. Projects might include the maintenance of the dirt road, the building of a community house, school or latrine, or installing a dam for fish farming. It is always noted who has taken part and most families will send at least one representative. These communal workdays are sometimes organised by the *jilanqo* or *dirigente*, sometimes by another *líder* or *promotor*. The relationships between all these roles are discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

These then are the prerequisites for right to land: descent and the fulfilment of social obligations. The practice of usufruct is, however, influenced by yet more factors. The long term relationship that any individual or family might have fostered with a piece of land and, simultaneously the instantaneous claim that performing *llank'ay* creates, are central among these, as the event of an *oca* theft will now make clear.

The oca theft – access through llank'ay and enduring connections

It was a Sunday afternoon and the church service had just ended. But instead of the customary football match a heated meeting began. There had been a theft in the village, three 50 litre bags of *oca*, still sitting in the field, fresh from harvest, had disappeared a few days earlier. Don Gregorio Díaz and his

wife, Doña Alfreda, from the nearby village of Vila Victoria, were the victims of the theft. Though not from P'iya Qayma, Don Gregorio claimed the rights to a parcel of land in the village (See map of P'iya Qayma, page 107, or at back of thesis). He belongs to the P'iya Qayma *originario* family of Díaz, none of whom live in P'iya Qayma any longer, and the branch of the Díaz family who live in Vila Victoria have not worked any land in the village for a long time. Neither have they been fulfilling communal obligations there, the official prerequisite for continued access to land. But in their time, the Díaz were a wealthy family in P'iya Qayma who every year slaughtered a white bull, a white llama and a white sheep to the mountains, white animals being considered the most valuable and sacred. They were a powerful family and, according to some versions of events, it had been generally agreed in the village that the Díaz family should always have access to land in P'iya Qayma should they wish it. Given their longstanding absence from the village, many middle aged or younger people were, however, unaware of the former standing of the Díaz family, or their purported continued claim to land.

That Sunday morning Doña Alfreda, wife of Don Gregorio Díaz, had come to P'iya Qayma crying and voiced her grievances to the pre-service crowd. The three bags had been stolen from the field during a night earlier that week. As it happens the culprits, Don Gerónimo Chajhuari Mamani and Don Felipe Veizaga Condori, two of the oldest members of P'iya Qayma, had confessed the theft to Don Gerónimo's neighbour, Don Tiburcio, who in turn had told his father, Don Basilio. At the meeting that Sunday after the church service Don Basilio outed the two thieves. Both Don Gerónimo and Don Felipe were present and a heated argument ensued. The reasoning employed by the two old men in their defence offers insight into the various discourses regarding how access to land is established, as does the counter-arguments put forward by Don Gregorio and Doña Alfreda, and the final verdict, determined by the dirigente, Don Benito.

Don Gerónimo Chajhuari Mamani claimed the land belonged to him, or at least to P'iya Qayma, but certainly not to the Díaz family as they had lapsed in

their communal obligations to the community, thus invoking official *ayllu* rules regarding access. Don Tomás and Don Valentín Chui Cruz, two men of good standing in their early middle age, argued that they knew from their fathers that this field was Díaz land and taking the *oca* was unquestionably an act of theft. The Díaz claim may not accord with the normal rules but was, according to Don Tomás and Don Valentín, all the same legitimate as it was based on the family's special connection with the land. Others argued that, even if the land was not rightfully Díaz land, someone had clearly worked hard for the *oca*, whoever makes the effort to transform the land has the strongest claim, and it should not have been taken away in the middle of the night. Rather, the issue should have been broached with Don Gregorio Díaz in a daylight discussion. It would have been impossible to miss the fact that Don Gregorio and Doña Alfreda, members of the Díaz family, had been clearing and working this particular field in P'iya Qayma during the year – so most people present reasoned that if the older men had had issues with the Díaz family's right to work that land it should have been brought up much earlier. The fact that the two old men had taken the *oca* in the middle of the night rather than confronting Don Gregorio in daylight does indicate that they did not have confidence in their case gaining strong support in a public forum. On the other hand, they did not take much care to avoid being caught so must also have had some faith in the legitimacy of their accusation against Don Gregorio.

One might consider why these men decided to rob Don Gregorio's field in the first place, rather than a field belonging to somebody else. I suggest that several factors influenced their decision to take the *oca* that night and that all of them connect to the tension between practice and rules. Firstly, the social repercussions of being in a dispute over land with someone from another village are less serious than fighting with a close neighbour; secondly, they sincerely believed that Don Gregorio's claim was less than completely fair and probably felt grieved by the injustice; thirdly, they calculated that, in case of being caught, they could at the very least cast doubt on Don Gregorio's claim and therefore not risk serious retribution; lastly, as there were not

many people left in P'iya Qayma old enough to actually remember the days when the Díaz family worked and lived in P'iya Qayma, Don Gerónimo and Don Felipe had probably hoped that nobody else would remember the details of the Díaz claim. These speculations regarding the motive of the theft circulated in the village, in particular people focused on the last one and were angered by the idea that the two old men thought they could outwit the rest of the village.

Don Gerónimo Chajhuari Mamani, a frail man of 80, was growing increasingly angry. He declared he was prepared to fight for the *oca* and his honour, and added that he would send his sons to fight Don Gregorio's sons in Vila Victoria. Two of Don Gerónimo's sons, Don Valerio and Don Pablo, were present at the meeting and both clearly expressed that they had no intention of engaging in a fistfight with the Díaz family. Don Pablo appeared quite ashamed of his father's behavior, whilst his brother, Don Valerio, was more amused. The issue needed to be resolved. The acting *dirigente*, Don Benito, stepped in to mediate a resolution. He was visibly irritated with the situation, saying that P'iya Qayma did not want trouble with Vila Victoria and that the two old men would have to return the *oca* to Don Gregorio and apologise. Don Gerónimo and Don Felipe reluctantly agreed and left the meeting with sullen faces. As they left, Don Gerónimo shouted back that they had eaten most of the *oca* already anyway (clearly an impossibility as three 50 litre bags could not be devoured in a couple of evenings). In reaching his judgment Don Benito pointed to the fact that regardless of right to land, the *oca* had been produced through *llank'ay* performed by Don Gregorio and Doña Alfreda and therefore, all else considered, the *oca* was theirs.

The *oca* theft twists and tests the intersection between *llank'ay*, rules over social obligation, and ultimate access. In this case practice of *llank'ay* trumped the system of social obligation, and its function as communal glue, which became a secondary consideration. But the actions of Don Gerónimo and Don Felipe, and the fact that they were not punished for the 'theft,' suggests that the case was not clear-cut. In addition to the power of *llank'ay*,

and lurking in the background of this case, is the notion of a special relationship built with the land. The following chapter will explore this issue deeper, the ties that people have with the land and the agency of the landscape.

Conclusion

In this thesis I argue that *llank'ay* is central to understanding life in the *ayllu*. In this chapter I have outlined the role it plays in the development of *runa* people and its place and power in the network of factors that influence peoples' access to land. The activities that are *llank'ay*, such as ploughing, sowing, harvesting, grinding, herding, weaving and many more, create people, *runakuna*, who have the embodied skills, experiences and knowledge to transform land in the *ayllu*. *Runakuna* are able to work the land well and make the land produce. *Llank'ay* enables the land to bear fruit, and also shapes the landscape through the creation of taskscape. The very concept of *llank'ay* is in itself premised on its ability to transform land. *Llank'ay* is the word employed to describe most of the tasks in P'iya Qayma. Although it might be thought of as identical to 'work,' this would be a misrepresentation. *Llank'ay* is neither separate from leisure nor always performed out of necessity. It is also a far narrower concept than work, in terms of labour, as it excludes a majority of forms of paid work in urban areas, but it is a far wider concept than work in terms purpose and value, incorporating notions of the purpose of life and what it is to be human.

An investigation into *llank'ay* enables an understanding of *ayllu* personhood and access to land. As demonstrated, the 'official' *ayllu* rules regarding the usufruct of land are overridden by rights based on the practice of *llank'ay*. An examination of *originario* claims in general, and the claim of the Díaz family in particular, illustrate that legitimate entitlements to land concern the extent and intensity of previous engagement with it, rather than being rooted in immemorial ancestral presence. While the rules exercise some influence over access, by for instance excluding Don Victor from the *aynuqa* lands, practice acts as the real legitimator. Through practice, the Veizaga family that Don

Tomás belongs to has established itself as an *originario* family in the area; and the Díaz family refers to its previous intense relationship with the land when disregarding *ayllu* rules. It is a circular state of affairs: the creation of *runa* people through *llank'ay*, whose participation in *llank'ay* and associated *runa* status, in turn creates and legitimate claims to the land needed in order to perform *llank'ay*.

Chapter 5: 'The mountain ate his heart' – Protestant conversion and the vernacular landscape

Since the conversion life is so much better for the soul, now that we know that we are so much closer to salvation. There are two roads in life and two '*patrones*' (landlords) on earth. One is evil and if you walk down that road and follow that *patrón* you get to hell and Satan. The other road is good and leads to God and salvation. I don't smoke many cigarettes or drink alcohol now. Before we used to worship *Pachamama*, sometimes we'd just pick up a stone that might resemble the shape of a bull a bit and start worshipping it. But now we know that this is idolatry and sinful. God has made everything, but we shouldn't worship the things that he made, we should only worship him. If you need more information I recommend that you buy that book – the New Testament, it's available in Spanish, and even English, I think.

Don Valentín, 52, P'iya Qayma resident

In the mid-1980s, P'iya Qayma, along with a handful of other villages in the *zona alta* of Kirkiyawí, converted to Baptism and its inhabitants became members of the Bolivian Baptist Union (*Unión Bautista Boliviana*, UBB). This religious conversion from Catholicism to Baptism has transformed the relationship between the residents and the local land. In the literature on the *ayllu*, ritual and religion constitutes one of the four main ways in which people are generally described as engaging with the land (Abercrombie 1998; Allen 1988; Canessa 2012; Fernandez Juarez 1995; Harris 2006). The others are kinship and relatedness (Allen 1988; Canessa 2012; Sax 2011), land management and ownership (Goodale 2001, 2002; Goudsmit 2006, 2008; McNeish 2001; Platt 1982b) and labour (Gose 1994; Mayer 2002; Urton 1981). Baptism has reconfigured local rituals and *fiestas* relating to the agricultural calendar by forbidding alcohol consumption as well as practices of idolatry, such as public sacrifices to chthonic deities; thus the conversion has transformed and muted one medium of interaction between people and land. However, while people in P'iya Qayma, including Don Valentín quoted above, reject overt practices of idolatry, the chthonic powers – the *Pachamama*, *apus* (sacred mountain peaks) and *achachilas* (smaller spirits,

sometimes connected with ancestors) – remain. They may not be conceived of as deities or as being akin to saints as they were in Catholic times (cf Harris 2006). But they are certainly still present and, as the fate of the P'iya Qayma resident, Don Facundo, will illustrate, have the power to kill. In this chapter I analyse the powers that still exist in the land, what they do and why they remain.

As P'iya Qayma is a Baptist village, where overt rituals aimed at the land cannot be found, and are therefore not available as a means by which to analyse religion or landscape, the village offers the opportunity to understand the relationship people have with agentive land without looking through the lens of 'sacred landscape.' I argue that, even though the rituals performed in Catholic villages to ensure the fertility of the earth have been severely scaled back in P'iya Qayma, the practice of *llank'ay* recognises and recreates the animate landscape on a daily basis, thus sustaining the chthonic powers. The daily activity, *llank'ay*, is then a mutually constitutive interrelationship between *runakuna* and animate land. In addition, I argue that the conversion has placed an emphasis on *llank'ay* as virtuous, as a practice which assists in securing eternal salvation. As such it has strengthened rural identity and could in this sense be interpreted as empowering to the local inhabitants. In the eyes of the inhabitants of P'iya Qayma this emphasis also lends added legitimacy to the already established form of engagement with the land – *llank'ay*. But whilst the aesthetics of Protestantism values life lived in P'iya Qayma, it is unable to encompass the whole reality as people in P'iya Qayma experience it to be true. Therefore, as the following pages will explore, people are constantly trying to piece together and make sense of a world full of power.

The last 30 years has seen an explosion in the growth and number of Protestant churches in Bolivia and wider Latin America, a pluralisation of religious society (Levine 2009) and a concomitant increase of academic

interest in the subject.⁶⁸ Although the Baptist church has had a presence in Bolivia since the end of the 19th century and the Bolivian Baptist Union dates back to 1935, the Baptist conversion in P'iya Qayma was part of this more recent Protestant diffusion that intensified after 1980.⁶⁹ The motives of those who converted were connected to the growth of the 'new' Protestant churches and their increasing presence as a viable, legitimate and recognisable non-Catholic option. When the missionaries arrived in P'iya Qayma the villagers were already familiar with the concept of Protestant conversion and its growing popularity. Protestants now make up almost 20% of the Bolivian population and the highest conversion rates are in rural areas (World Evangelical Alliance 2012). In urban areas, the converted are almost exclusively inhabitants of poorer communities made up of recent migrants. Within this broader set of trends, Baptists account for a relatively small proportion of Protestants in Bolivia and wider Latin America where the more fundamentalist, charismatic denominations, founded in the United States in the 20th century, have gained most ground. Despite some marked differences between Baptist doctrine and that of the majority of Evangelical Protestant groups in Latin America, people in P'iya Qayma do not emphasise these.⁷⁰ Rather than referring to themselves as Baptists they employ the words *evangelicos* and *hermanos/hermanas* (brothers/sisters), words used across the continent to denote members of all Protestant churches (Muratorio 1980). Baptism in P'iya Qayma should be understood as part of this broader Protestant movement, both in terms of motives for conversion and sense of belonging.

The growing presence of Protestantism in the Andes, and wider Latin America, has been seen as either radically altering existing relationships and

⁶⁸ See Gros (1999); Lehman (1996); Levine (2009); Martin (2002, 1990); Stoll (1990); Stoll & Garrard Burnett, (eds) (1993).

⁶⁹ The Canadian Baptist Pastor Archibald Reekie is identified by the Bolivian Baptist Union as their key founding member. He began his missionary work in Oruro, Bolivia, in 1898 where he founded a Baptist school.

⁷⁰ Evangelical churches are strictly speaking those movements which are rooted in the Methodist movement in England in the 1730s, most of which later developed in North America, and based around the basic tenets of: being born again, Biblical authority and Crucicentrism, i.e. the death and resurrection of Jesus. Evangelicals see it as their task to spread the Gospel.

ideas in a negative sense, or as transformative in a more positive way. Between these positions is another which emphasises that underlying continuities have minimised the transformative abilities of this religious conversion. Some see it as threatening to human sociality, sociality between people and land, and the integrity of the *ayllu* (e.g. Abercrombie 1998; Allen 1988; Carter and Mamani 1989; Van Vleet 2011). Others claim it has empowered local populations (e.g. Muratorio 1980; Rappaport 1984). The stance which stresses continuity and resilience (especially of 'original' *ayllu* culture) is one focused on local appropriation or 'consumption' (e.g. Gros 1999).

The following pages discuss Baptist practice in P'iya Qayma, and peoples' thoughts and experiences of conversion and of their life as converts, with reference to this wider debate of the role and power of Protestantism in the Andes, and wider Latin America. This chapter investigates, in particular, the current relationship with the animate land, analysing how it is practised and conceptualised in the converted village. I conclude by emphasising the central position of agricultural labour in the maintenance of the bond between people and land in the *ayllu*.

P'iya Qayma and Baptism – motives for conversion

The conversion of the village of P'iya Qayma from Catholicism to Baptism took place in the mid-1980s, when a majority of the present inhabitants were only children or teenagers and many of the young adults had not yet been born. The area was visited by a small group of Canadian Baptist missionaries who, accompanied by Bolivian missionaries, travelled the rural areas converting Catholics. In addition to P'iya Qayma, about 10 other villages in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, all of them in the *zona alta*, have converted to Protestantism in the last 30 years. According to municipal data (PDM 2007) the Protestant population of the Province of Bolívar stood at 16% in 2007. The vast majority, including the central village of Bolívar, however, remain Catholic.

By the accounts of those who remember the missionaries' visit, conversion

was swift and included most of the village population;⁷¹ certainly at present every villager identifies as Baptist. Don Tomás calculates that the Canadian missionaries were only in the area for about a week and ‘then we all became *hermanos*.’ People describe the conversion as uncontested, often cringing in retrospect at the thought of how ‘sinful’ they had been previous to the conversion. I regularly heard the sentence; ‘life is so much more *sano* (healthy/sound/wholesome) and *tranquilo* (calm, serene) now that we are *hermanos*.’ The moment of conversion is mystified in blurred memories and lost with those who are now gone. But the continued ‘eternal return of conversion’ (Harris 2006), the everyday rejection of certain things thought to be un-Baptist, re-enacts the initial rupture. The rationale used to motivate these rejections tells us something about the tensions that exist today, which are important to consider in order to contextualise the later sections.

A brief discussion of the motives for conversion include analysis of: the ban on alcohol; liberation from local hierarchies and Catholic power centres; imagined and real inclusion in national and international communities; adoption of a ‘whiter,’ and more ‘modern’ identity; and eternal salvation – as well as the validation of peasant life. Local motivations for conversion (or post-hoc rationalisations of these) and the reasons why people remain Baptist are related to the academic debate over the destructive or productive force of Protestantism, but in unexpected ways. For instance, the banning of alcohol which is often listed as having been a blow to *ayllu* sociality, was for many converts a key motive for conversion for the opposite reason: it is said to have yielded improved sociality.

The *fiestas* in Catholic villages last for days and the level of intoxication is high. Many, especially older women, in the Catholic village of Bolívar, spoke with sorrow and disgust of the behaviour of their drunk men and of the beatings and loss of money they had suffered throughout their lives at *fiesta*

⁷¹ All accounts offered to me described a total conversion of all inhabitants of P’iya Qayma but it is possible that a number of people who have migrated from the area in the last 25 years remain Catholic and religious dispute might have been one of many reasons for migration.

times. A significant number of older women who had converted listed the ban on alcohol enjoined on members of Baptist communities as a key reason for why life was better as a *hermana*, and often added that this was one of the aspects that had initially attracted them to Baptism (cf Brusco 1993; Gill 2000; Harris 2000; Harvey 1994; Lazar 2000). In effect, the ban on alcohol is conducive to sociality between the couple (cf Brusco 1993; Lazar 2008). Domestic violence was brought up as a topic a number of times by men in P'iya Qayma, in connection with a claim that they no longer beat their wives, as contrasted with their pre-conversion practices when, they confessed, they had done so while under the influence of alcohol. They would often say that home life was more '*tranquilo*' now that they no longer drank or hit their wives. And women told me they would never want to return to the Catholic times of alcohol and violence. Doña Nieves said her mother still cries (*waqasan*) over the beatings she suffered throughout the years by her husband. Doña Ursula, Don Basilio's older sister and Don Benito's mother, who lives in P'iya Qayma, did not mention beatings but instead emphasises how she has suffered in life after being widowed at a young age. Her husband, a Veizaga, died many years ago, in Catholic times, from drinking too much during a *fiesta*, leaving Doña Ursula without a partner to live alongside and share the responsibilities of children, animals and land. While domestic violence has by no means been eradicated by the ban on alcohol, alcohol related deaths and violence between men has, according to villagers, decreased, and there is certainly a general consensus that women suffer less in these Baptist times.⁷²

In some settings, conversion to Protestantism has been experienced as liberating people from local hierarchies or systems of bondage (Gros 1999). Alcohol and *fiestas* may be fundamental to religious life in the Catholic villages, but they cost money, and at every *fiesta*, one or two families will spend most of their savings on alcohol and food for all. Converted families are now able to save up small amounts of money which they spend on livestock,

⁷² Stories of excessive drinking were not limited to men, as previously mentioned, Don Tomás strongly believed that his own mother drunk herself to a premature death. But women alcoholics were in the minority and their behaviour rarely violent.

plots of land in the urban areas and a range of other goods – a freedom experienced by some as empowering (cf Gros 1999; Muratorio 1980). It was never articulated to me that this new freedom was also experienced as liberation from local hierarchies. Many of the studies (e.g. Van Vleet) that emphasis how conversion can serve as a rejection of entrenched power structures or subversion of oppressive systems of reciprocity, were conducted in larger, urban settings where converts, through becoming Protestant, distance themselves from a majority of Catholic neighbours and kin. In P'iya Qayma the whole population is now Protestant and in the surrounding area there are several other Protestant villages. This means that any shifts in relationships as a result of conversion are not due to the splitting of a group or a conscious stance of differentiation from others.

Another reason for conversion in the Andes, proffered by Barbara Bradby (1982), is the attempt to achieve economic and political autonomy from Catholic power centres. It has also been argued that the rise of Protestant churches should be understood in the context of the decline of the Catholic Church in Latin America from the 1950s and 1960s, and therefore the inability of these same power centres to retain a presence in the rural areas. While the church had previously been intertwined with, and provided moral legitimacy to, colonial governments, it distanced itself from the post-revolution dictatorships and as such lost its long enjoyed tight bond with the state (Canessa 2000:133–134). Added to this is the lack of Catholic priests working in rural areas; unlike Protestant pastors, they go through many years of higher education before they are able to practice (Canessa 2000; Levine 2009). The lack of a Catholic presence in the rural areas and of church representatives who can legitimately baptise, marry, bury and say mass certainly leaves a lot of Catholics in Kirkiyawí wanting.

I have no direct evidence from P'iya Qayma to suggest that conversion was motivated by a desire to be free of Catholic dominance. However, the inadequacy and physical remoteness of the church were important factors, and people do express relief that they no longer had to walk to the village of

Bolívar in order to attend a 'proper' church service, get married, christen their children or even bury their dead, but could instead legitimately perform these practices in their own village. And, while the Baptist pastor does not visit as often as people would wish, he still does so more frequently than the Catholic priest based in Bolívar visits the villages of the Province.⁷³ Protestantism also manages to maintain a constant presence in the village through Evangelical radio stations in a way that the Catholic Church does not. On several stations 'real' pastors preach all hours of the day and thus some of the hunger for more contact with urban pastors and churches is assuaged. Evangelical radio programmes and stations should thus not be underestimated as a factor in successful conversion and continued commitment. This is especially true in communities like P'iya Qayma where the lack of electricity or mobile network coverage means radios powered by batteries are the main source of information about, and point of contact with, the rest of the country.

If the overt rejection of Catholic political centralism is not a key issue in Protestant conversion, the new experience of a different kind of inclusion certainly is. The new connections that converted rural areas instantaneously form with global churches such as the Seventh Day Adventists, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), are interesting in terms of the relocation of power centres and real and imagined inclusion into a global community. During my stay, the villagers received an invitation to a three-day long prayer meeting from a Philadelphia Church in Oruro. This inter-denominational communication exemplifies the sense that all Protestants in Latin America are *hermanos* and imagine themselves as a large connected community where specific church affiliation is secondary to a non-Catholic, *evangelico* identity. On receipt of the invitation, which was read out in church one Sunday, everyone was elated. While those present quickly resigned themselves to the logistic impossibility of the journey as the

⁷³ The urban Baptist leaders are always referred to as *pastor* (pastor), while the village leaders are deacons.

invitation had reached them too late in the day,⁷⁴ they remained excited about the letter and Don Benito, the acting deacon, was requested to read it out aloud several times.

The inclusion into a global network of Protestant churches places converts one step further away from the Catholic indian who has never been considered a real Christian in the eyes of the non-indigenous population (Harris 2006), and thereby one step from the very bottom rung of the societal ladder, they could become 'white skinned indians' (Ströbele-Gregor 1989). While membership in the Evangelical churches appears to offer inclusion in global networks, its promise of inclusion in the Bolivian middle class (Gros 1999) is, of course, almost always left unfulfilled. Canessa argues that through membership of Evangelical churches the indigenous poor 'can be seen as leapfrogging from indian to Western, rejecting *mestizaje* on the way' (Canessa 2000: 138). A leap to western identity is of course highly improbable in reality and the *mestizo* middle class is the closest position that people in P'iya Qayma have a realistic – if remote – chance of reaching. Judging from my study, however, Protestant identity can offer only limited advances within the Bolivian class system, and may even have the opposite effect. Ironically, membership in Protestant churches has come to be seen as a marker of indigenous peasant/working class identity (Muratorio 1980) and has arguably created, rather than broken down, a barrier to social mobility. The Bolivian middle and upper classes remain overwhelmingly Catholic and in fact show disdain for, and annoyance with, Evangelical churches and their members. In addition, as Muratorio (1980) argues, the conversion has created an inter-group split, dividing the poorest in society and thus potentially threatening wider class sociality.

Catholic villagers in the *ayllu* do not have many warm words to say about the fact that their neighbours and often kin have converted. Van Vleet (2011) describes how Catholics believe that Protestants have made pacts with the

⁷⁴ As there is no postal service in the area the letter had been delivered a few days earlier by one of the *ruta* drivers and there is no telling when it had originally been 'posted.'

devil – this is often framed in terms of accumulation; the perception is that Protestants are sacrificing sociality for accumulation. This was illustrated by the converts' rejection of the full-blown *cargo*-system and their resulting ability to accumulate some money. I was often told by Catholic villagers in Kirkiyawí and the Catholic lower-middle classes in the urban areas that *hermanos* were hypocrites (cf Lazar 2008: 168) – that they judged others for drinking and then drank themselves, that they were the worst wife beaters. As an example, the NGO engineer Wilford told me how he much prefers working in the Catholic villages in Bolívar. He thinks that Evangelicals are more selfish and less inclined to work together, that they talk about helping each other and being *hermanos*, but that they are actually very individualistic and greedy. His words were often echoed by both rural and urban Catholics in many conversations during my time in Bolivia. The idea that Protestants believe themselves to be superior to their Catholic neighbours is prevalent and expressed with indignation, often by the middle classes who see the Protestants as uppity and self-inflated (cf Lazar 2008: 159). Although conversion and continued commitment may in part be explained by the fantasy of social advance or leapfrogging, this is a dream which rarely materialises or has much chance of doing so. The social capital accrued through membership in Evangelical churches is not valued by the Catholic *mestizo* population and cannot readily be transferred to monetary capital.

In sum, while membership in the Protestant churches confers both real and imagined inclusion in global churches, on a national level it reinforces already existing divisions and creates new intra-group splits among the rural and urban indigenous poor, some of whom claim that Baptism, with its North American associations, is a 'whiter' and thus superior religion to Catholicism. The perception by the indigenous people of Latin America that Evangelical churches are more modern than Catholic ones has been noted by Gros (1999) and Canessa (2000). People in P'iya Qayma often speak about their new, more civilised, religion in the same breath as they mention their new president, Evo Morales – proof that they are no longer second class citizens and that they now deserve the respect of the urban *mestizo* and white

population. The promise and possibility of inclusion and social 'advancement', no matter how precarious, has surely played a part in people's orientation towards, and continued affiliation to, these churches.

Finally there is the motivating factor of eternal salvation. Just as the urban population doubts the Christian validity of indigenous Catholicism, the indigenous Catholics themselves sometimes worry about their own salvation (Harris 2006: 71). They know that their at times excessive drinking and idolatry are not looked upon favourably by Catholic priests. The converted of P'iya Qayma claim to feel at peace knowing they are now leading a more Christian life. If we are to take seriously the doubts of indigenous Catholics, and the Evangelicals' claimed experience of spiritual peace, then we must also take seriously what is really at stake here: convictions about eternal salvation. And while economic issues, alcohol, politics and social inclusion inevitably influence people's decisions, my informants invariably cited salvation as a main motivating factor. Given the emotion and interest that people devote to discussing it, its importance should not be underestimated. Related to this point – and the one in the previous paragraph regarding the failure of the Indian ever to be a real Catholic – is the fact that Protestantism is presented to them as a religion which specifically values simple rural life, which views the Andean peasant, not as a second-rate worshipper but as the archetypal and ideal church member. This is a religion which they are 'better' at than the urban *mestizos* and *criollos*. They have been told by white missionaries that now God will love them as much, if not more, than he loves their *mestizo* countrymen, and they often repeated this to me. Muratorio (1980:50) describes how, in Chiborazo, Peru, the translation of the New Testament into the local Quechua dialect by the Protestant missionaries convinced the rural converts that as God was speaking to them directly, he loved them too. In P'iya Qayma people rejoiced in recognising themselves in the pastoral imagery of the Bible. They informed me that the pastor from Oruro told them that many people in Jesus' time were herders and shepherds – that theirs was a 'godly' vocation. Able to relate very well to the anxiety that Jesus the shepherd must feel when his flock is not with him, they express a

belief that their basic, subsistence farming lives are congruent with what is needed to secure one's entry into heaven. They look at posters and flyers, printed and distributed by a range of Evangelical churches, depicting the poor peasant climbing the winding path to heaven, a city of gold, while the disco dancing, jeans wearing, car driving, Catholic urbanites are heading down the path to hell, a lake of eternal fire. Repudiation of their previous religious practices as devil worship is a common feature that unites *Evangelicos* in the Andes (Harris 2006: 66). They also speak of being more 'civilised', as they don't worship *Pachamama*, the *achachilas*, the *apus* or *condoris* (condors, associated with leaders and political power) or take part in non-Christian, alcohol-fuelled rituals. In short, where Catholicism has come to be experienced locally as a religion which the indian does not do 'well' and therefore does not guarantee salvation, Protestant evangelism both indexes a modern identity and is a practice the indians, by virtue of their 'simple lives,' 'naturally' excel at.

Although several factors may have motivated their conversion, exactly what aspects persuaded the people of P'iya Qayma back in the early 1980s can no longer be determined or verified. However, the reasons people offer now, whether remembered, re-imagined or changed in the retelling, tell us something about their perception of the relative merits of Baptism and Catholicism. Baptism is seen to provide a 'purer' and healthier life which offers the possibility of 'advancement' and inclusion in both this world and the next. It also exposes the reservations people have about Catholicism and a sense that as Catholics they were doomed before they even began. So while the *fiestas*, rituals and traditions of sacrifice created from a synthesis of Catholic and pre-Catholic practices have been 'destroyed' in conversion, Baptism has also encouraged a new pride in peasant life and labour.

Protestantism – a 'uniquely destructive rupture' or a complementary force?

The relationship between Catholicism and pre-Catholic beliefs has often been described as syncretic (Harris 2006:69). Although this term is laden with

misleading assumptions concerning the possibility of pure, unmixed religion, or any cultural phenomenon, it aims to describe a very real synthesis of beliefs and practices which may or may not add up to coherent cosmologies, free of contradictions, but which nonetheless constitute belief systems that are perceived as whole rather than fragmented in character (Shaw & Stewart 1994). The Catholic conversion left spaces which allowed for a continuation of indigenous, pre-Catholic belief systems (Canessa 2000), and thus a synthesis of the two. For instance, the cult of the Catholic saints was able to accommodate pre-Christian chthonic powers (Harris 2006). And, as part of a more recent trend described by Andrew Orta (2004), in certain Andean localities the church has even begun promoting a syncretism of Catholic and indigenous belief as the purest form of Andean Christianity. Many of the studies which comment on the Protestant conversion in the Andes (e.g. Abercrombie 1998; Allen 1988; Carter and Mamani 1989; Lehmann 1996; Van Vleet 2011) have a very different tone. They emphasise the inflexibility and anti-syncretistic nature of the religion and its propensity to suffocate pre-Protestant and pre-Catholic belief systems and practices through its abolition of alcohol, *fiestas*, ritual co-parenthood, the cult of saints and agentive land. Protestantism is thought to leave no rock unturned, to have no patience with idol hybrids and semi-saints, and to be intolerant of alcohol, *fiestas* or carnivals; it staunchly rejects the 'hybridity' (Canessa 2000) which the Catholic Church allowed for and at times even encouraged.

The main criticism levelled at Protestantism is the putative threat it poses to sociality between people. In the prohibition of alcohol and rejection of *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo*, conversion reconfigures and undermines a full-blown *cargo* system and ceremonial consumption, and as such subverts sociality (Carter and Mamani 1989; Abercrombie 1998; Allen 1988; Van Vleet 2011) and the communal re-enactment and thus safeguarding of the group's historical memory (Abercrombie 1998). In addition, as Krista Van Vleet points out, conversion can also threaten sociality between people and land – 'Converts no longer contribute to the particular and more general efforts at maintaining relationships considered crucial to the production and

reproduction of fields, animals, and human beings' (2011:851).

However, in P'iya Qayma, despite the lack of *fiestas* and consumption of alcohol, sociality between people, and between people and the land, still persists. Unlike the converts described by Van Vleet above, people are contributing to the relationships necessary to the production and reproduction of the community and the fields. One reason why P'iya Qayma has not experienced this breakdown in sociality that Van Vleet describes is that her study focuses on a community split by the conversion, where in P'iya Qayma conversion was a village affair. This basic difference between the circumstances surrounding conversion in P'iya Qayma and those in the community studied by Van Vleet illustrates how the impact of conversion can vary between places, with different experiences and outcomes. And it shows that crucial to the shape which Protestantism takes in a convert community is the particular and local way in which people appropriate the new religion.

The P'iya Qayma experience is in part illuminated by a perspective that emphasises the local experience and consumption/appropriation of conversion: that is, the Amerindianisation of Protestantism (Gros 1999). This perspective, by exploring local synthesis, stresses the resilience of pre-Christian cultural traditions and cosmologies. Thirdly, and related to this literature, is a growing body of work which sees the fear of Protestantism as unfounded. It suggests that Christianity, both Catholicism and Protestantism, is not necessarily incompatible with pre-conversion practices, and previous indigenous belief systems and may even complement these (Gallaher 2007; Orta 2004). Muratorio (1980) points to certain aspects of the new Protestant practices which could be interpreted as empowering converts. One example is the revalorisation of the Quechua language through the translation of the Bible into local dialect; another is the removal of the pressure of ceremonial consumption, which can also be liberating, both socially and as mentioned, financially (Gros 1999). Muratorio adds that while some systems of reciprocity are weakened, others are strengthened. For instance, Protestantism has enlarged networks of support in urban migration

communities (in Peru) (Muratorio 1980: 54). As both Lazar (2008) and Gill (1990) have argued, while conversion may lead to the breakdown of some relationships, it also opens up new spaces of sociality.⁷⁵

In P'iya Qayma the effects of conversion are clearly multiple and cannot be described as either destructive or productive, as will be detailed in the following section. In certain aspects of their lives, P'iya Qayma residents have worked hard to become more Baptist and have cast off previous cultural practices emphasising new aspects of their identity, but in other ways they have remained staunchly un-Baptist, especially, as this chapter will go on to describe, in the relationship with the animate land.

Baptist practice in P'iya Qayma

While the people of P'iya Qayma may see themselves and may be seen by others as 'naturally' suited to Protestantism, the type of Baptism practised in the village is not easily recognisable as such. For instance they do not adhere to basic Baptist doctrine, church attendance and knowledge of the Bible is minimal, they have retained several Catholic practices such as *compadrazgo*; and they still chew coca leaves and sometimes drink. However, as will be detailed towards the end of this section, the ritualistic engagement with the *fiestas* tied into the agricultural calendar is radically different in comparison to that of the nearby Catholic villages.

Since there is no absolute Baptist authority, and since Baptism as a church is supposedly anti-hierarchical and vehemently promotes the separation of state and church in order to safeguard the independence of individual churches, there is a large degree of variation between Baptist churches. However, there are some key aspects of Baptism that a majority of churches have in common but that people in P'iya Qayma do not subscribe to. The two most obviously divergent elements are the lack of adult, or believer, baptism, and the lack of total immersion during the baptism rite itself. Instead, infant

⁷⁵ For instance Gill (1990) has demonstrated how protestant communities the cities provided important social spaces and relationships for vulnerable female migrants.

baptism, and the aspersion or affusion of water during the ritual continue to be practised as they were in Catholic times. In other settings, a defining characteristic of the Baptist movement is the concept of believer baptism, which recognises the legitimacy of a baptism only when it is performed on a professed believer. When I enquired about adult or believer baptism, I was simply told that it is not necessary because the baptism is taken care of when children are young and there is no need to do it again. This relates to the importance of certain 'initiating' rites which take place in childhood and ensure the full socialisation of a person. These include ceremonies of naming and the first haircut (cf Canessa 2012, Harris 2006) and also some form of church baptism. As these rites are key to the development of full personhood, and the 'un-initiated' child is vulnerable to illnesses and death, people are loath to wait until adulthood until they are performed.

The position of the pastors is interesting with regard to this tendency to retain the baptism of children and forgo adult/believer baptism. While the deacons are local villagers, and as such part of the consensus that insists on the necessity of infant baptism, the pastors are urban-based and aware of the disregard of the basic principles of the church which this practice entails. Yet these pastors continue to perform the service and even issue certificates of baptism to the young, with the logo of the Bolivian Baptist Union printed across the top. This shows that the Protestant churches, too, offer spaces for hybridity and continued practice. These infant baptisms may not be condoned or even known to the leaders of the church; the spaces for flexibility are created by individual pastors just as the spaces for religious freedom in Catholic areas were – and still are – largely made available by individual priests rather than created by the church establishment.⁷⁶ So whilst it might be true that Evangelicals reject hybridity in theory (cf Canessa 2000), it is not true in practice in P'iya Qayma. Neither is it true in El Alto where Lazar describes how a Pentecostal church was rumoured to hire a *yatiri* (traditional Aymara healer) to conduct aspects of services in order to

⁷⁶ Although as exemplified by Orta's (2004) work, conscious synthesis has also occurred with the official backing of the Catholic church.

attract converts (Lazar 2008:168). As I have also described, it is not just the converts who engage in hybrid practices but also the church, the missionaries and pastors. As Lazar argues, even if Evangelism might on the surface be an aggressively modernising project, its absolutist rhetoric is blurred in practice and people make choices, and draw on various models of the world and personhood, in order to live a life that works for them (Lazar 2008:170-171).

Only a handful of people regularly go to church and few see Sunday as a day of rest although it is usually spent in close proximity to the homestead. Amongst the reasons given to me why individuals chose not to attend the Sunday service, the imperative to work was most common. The fact that tending to your fields is an acceptable alternative to singing psalms in church supports the notion that agricultural labour is seen to be valued by the Christian God.

The organisation and running of the church is a communal activity. It includes all the members of the village, even those who are not regular church goers, and is based on the rotative system of *ayllu* organisation of authority roles. Since there is no Baptist pastor living in P'iya Qayma or making frequent visits to the location, people share the task of leading the Sunday service and the responsibility for the upkeep of the church. Just like the roles of *dirigente* and *jilanqu*, the position of deacon rotates annually, and everyone will at some point have to shoulder the responsibility. The changeover takes place in January every year and is finalised during the same meeting at which the *dirigente* and *jilanqu* are rotated. Thus the Sunday services are led by a well-known neighbour, rather than a charismatic and enigmatic leader, and the intensity and passion of delivery varies widely.

The church is a relatively new building, erected after the conversion for the specific use of Baptist worship. The inside of the church is bare and undecorated. Notably absent are the icons and shrines to various saints which decorate rural Catholic churches. A few posters promoting vaccinations and the MAS party have been stuck on the wall and there are

two clocks, both of which have stopped working. The services are long and repetitive with readings from a Quechua translation of the New Testament and twenty or more songs in Quechua. Several of the teenage girls regularly attend the Sunday service. Sitting on the bench along the right-hand wall, they socialise, talk and giggle throughout the service, something the older participants do not seem to mind. Doña Paulina, who along with Don Benito is shouldering the responsibilities of deacon this year, usually begins the service. She is a small, devout woman in her sixties. As she speaks she appears both serious and nervous, which lends her an awkwardness but also an earnestness. She reads chosen sections from the New Testament and leads several songs. The readings are in Quechua but peppered with Spanish phrases and words, possibly added by Doña Paulina herself. Don Benito appears more relaxed; playing the guitar, he encourages the congregation to sing along and asks us to line up for the collection. At the front we drop our one or two boliviano coins (ten or twenty pence) into a box and the teenage girl, Lauriana, counts the money which is duly noted in the church log book. Don Gerónimo is one of the oldest men in the village and among the few literate individuals. He is thought to have studied the Bible in depth and, despite not holding the position of deacon this year, he chooses to lead a section of the service every Sunday. His sermons have elements of passion as he laments the many lost souls on this earth: 'Our friends and neighbours who still walk in darkness waiting to be converted and saved.' Most people are unmoved by his words and during my time in P'iya Qayma I came to learn that, though there was a general respect for his biblical expertise, he was considered a morally dubious character, known to lie and cheat and even abuse his moment on stage in the church as a space to push personal agendas. Indeed, he was one of the culprits in the *oca* theft affair in Chapter 4. Yet, he is indulged.

The Bible is the centrepiece of the service. In Baptism, and most Evangelical and Protestant movements, the scriptures lie at the heart of religious practice (Lehmann 1996). Every Sunday at the beginning of the service, Don Benito counts and makes a note of the number of attendants, and the number of

Bibles present. Great emphasis is placed on the latter. Though the participants clutch their Bibles proudly, at least half the village are illiterate, a majority of them women, and so are unable to read the Bible themselves. Those who can read rarely do so, as they work all day and when they come home in the evenings the light has gone. The lack of familiarity with the scriptures by preachers has been noted by Gomes (1991 in Lehmann 1996:176) as a common feature among Evangelical churches in Latin America. For many, therefore, the actual physicality of the book is experienced as the most direct link to God. Lehmann (1996: 176) has noted that this is true of members of many Pentecostal churches across Latin America.

The official religious practice in P'iya Qayma is neither Catholic nor particularly Baptist. While they believe in their Protestant legitimacy to run their own services and focus their worship in church on Jesus, rather than any of the Catholic saints, they continue—as I mentioned—to practise infant baptism. Further aspects of the local construction of religious practice are described below: ritual co-parenthood, rituals, *fiestas* and relationship with the land. There is evidence that people in P'iya Qayma 'consume' Baptism productively as Gros (1999) suggests, and he rightly argues that indigenous peoples' response to Protestantism is neither passive or impotent, and their acceptance of the new religious system is not one of submission, rather one which they shape and manipulate according to their needs, beliefs and abilities. However, 'Amerindian' Protestantism is not simply a result of productive consumption but also an outcome of the specific way that conversion happened, the particular emphases made by individual missionaries and the continual access rural populations have to these church representatives. For this reason I use the word construction here rather than consumption, to emphasise that it is not the transformative power of 'consumption' which creates differential practice because people are not 'fed' the whole product. Their contact with missionaries and pastors is limited as is their familiarity with the scriptures. They are exposed only to aspects of Baptist religious practice and from these bits they construct a new whole that

works for them.

As previously mentioned, sociality is the crucial thing which, according to some authors, is destabilised by Protestantism, through the rejection as pagan of ritual co-parenthood, alcohol and *fiestas*, the *cargo-system*, ritual sacrifice, the rite of the first haircut and the sharing of coca (Canessa 2000:135). However, ritual parenthood and co-parenthood, *padrinazgo* and *compadrazgo*, are Catholic institutions which, although officially rejected by the Evangelical churches, are a mainstay of kinship practices in all Evangelical villages in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí today. A majority of the married adults I knew had marriage godparents; indeed, if anything, the practice has grown in importance since conversion. Some of the older inhabitants of P'íya Qayma told me that they had not had *padrinos* for their marriages while all the younger couples had several – often they had separate *padrinos* for the cake, the music and even the fizzy drinks. The naming ceremony, the first haircut, and graduation from secondary school are all events which persist in P'íya Qayma and also involve the naming of godparents. I myself was made godmother of one teenage boy on his day of graduation and of two children on the days of their first haircuts. I was also made a godmother of the graduating class of 2009 for Vila Pampa secondary school, as well as sponsor of their school trip. So Protestantism has not caused the dwindling of practices of *padrinazgo* and *compadrazgo* in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí. In contrast with alcohol consumption and idolatry, *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* were not something perceived as un-Baptist by anyone; they were not illicit practices.

A second serious threat to sociality is the ban, placed by Protestant churches, on the intake of stimulating substances such as alcohol and coca. Canessa (2000:136) lists the ban on coca and alcohol as two of the less negotiable and therefore widespread markers of successful Protestant churches in the Andes. However, both drinking and the chewing of coca take place to a greater or lesser extent in P'íya Qayma. Alcohol is mainly drunk within the family home, and with a few exceptions, only in very small quantities, or occasionally in small amounts during communal events, such as after a day of

chuqhu, as described in Chapter 3, or – as will be discussed later in this chapter – during a burial service. However, it is never consumed to any excess as part of a ritual, or as a means to become inebriated in *fiesta* time.⁷⁷

While the drinking of alcohol is relatively limited in P'iya Qayma in comparison with the consumption in the Catholic villages, the continued usage of coca leaves, both for chewing and in rituals, is common. On a daily basis a vast majority of adults in P'iya Qayma, men and women, chew coca, and do so with *lejía*.⁷⁸ *Lejía* releases and enhances the stimulant in the coca leaf. It has been noted (Canessa 2000) that many Evangelicals in Bolivia who still chew coca do so without *lejía*, this being a middle ground between the possible full effect of coca and total abstinence, but in P'iya Qayma the two were always used together. And it has a further important ritual aspect, when spat to the earth as a form of sacrifice. A handful of people, mainly women, including Doña Paulina, reject coca chewing as un-Baptist, but the majority, including Doña Casimira, who, like Doña Paulina, is a devout female convert, continue to chew the leaf. A few people informed me that Jesus thinks the coca leaf is very good for them because it makes them stronger and therefore hard and 'good' workers. This chimes with the value of hard work in the self-construction of the *hermano* identity.

A third threat to sociality is the Protestant rejection of *fiestas*. I was often reminded that in P'iya Qayma there were no more *fiestas*: 'Here, we don't dance any longer,' said 65-year-old Don Calixto. Rosalia, 15, added: 'We don't have parties here. Once I was at a party in Vila Pampa, have you ever tried alcohol?' Another villager asserted:

I used to enjoy parties when I was younger, but not any longer, I'm happy that we don't have those parties any more. In Coyuma they are Catholic and this weekend there will be a party there, with dancing and chicha and pure alcohol.

⁷⁷This is in stark contrast to the incredible amounts of alcohol drunk during *fiesta* times in the Catholic villages where the feasting continues for days without a break.

⁷⁸ *Lejía*, also referred to and spelled *ljujt'a*, is chewed with coca leaves in order to help activate the alkaloids in the coca leaf. In Bolivia, *lejía* is usually either made from burnt quinoa stalks or limestone and is hard but powdery and light grey in colour. Also very common is the *lejía dulce* made from quinoa, aniseed and sugar, it is black, sweet and soft.

And, as Don Tomás said during Easter: 'In Catholic times, we would have taken these days off work and there would have been a party, but now most people will continue to work on the Friday and Saturday. We are very busy, just like normal.' (Again, agricultural labour is emphasised as the primary responsibility of people). During carnival time, in February, there was not a sign of festivity in P'iya Qayma. A lot of the men were still away in the towns engaging in paid labour (they may have joined the celebrations in town but if so, kept quiet about this once back in the village), and the women tended to the animals and children as normal. Peter Gose (1994) gives vivid descriptions of Christmas time in a Catholic Andean village; four days of dancing the *waylia*, drinking, singing and ritual fighting, but in P'iya Qayma Christmas is barely marked. Easter is given a bit more attention and *Todos Santos* (All Saints' Day), a little more again. It has a strong tradition within the Catholic church as a religious holiday but is also acknowledged and marked by Protestant churches so is not 'officially' banned in the Baptist villages in Kirkiyawí. It retains some of the structure of the Catholic celebration, with one day spent in the cemetery, decorating the graves of the dead, and another one or two in the homes of families who have recently lost members (cf Canessa 2012).

During the All Saints' Day that I spent in the village, Don Tomás' step-mother-in-law, Doña Severina, hosted one of the days of 'festivity' in memory of her recently deceased husband, Don Pascual. A majority of the village arrived at the house in the afternoon. Doña Severina, Don Tomás, his sister, Doña Filomena, and their families, had spent the previous day and that morning preparing the food. Bread was the most important foodstuff of the day and cousins Pedro and Alberto had spent hours twisting and shaping dough. In particular they created *t'anta wawas* (bread babies) and bread *escaleras*, (ladders), as well as simple rolls. The bread babies and ladders, along with soft drinks and toasted maize were placed on a table in the courtyard and offered up as food for the dead. People ate the hundreds of bread rolls and a

chuñusoup prepared by Doña Filomena. Don Gerónimo read some excerpts from the New Testament. The following day the same was repeated in the house of Don Victor and Doña Valeriana, both of Doña Valeriana's parents had passed away in recent years.⁷⁹ The day connected people with the dead and each other, but not overtly with the telluric powers (Harris 2000: 30); and whilst they chewed coca there was no consumption of alcohol.

Along with *fiestas*, *tinkus* (ritual fighting), both between bulls and people, has been disbanded in P'iya Qayma. The shedding of blood during *tinkus* is often interpreted as sacrifice to the *Pachmama* and *apus* (Harris 2006:59). *Toro tinkus* (fights between bulls) occurred frequently during the *tinku* season (starting in March and continuing into May) in the Catholic villages of Bolívar.⁸⁰ I was also aware of two accounts of *runa tinkus* (battles between people) in the Catholic villages. While a few people in P'iya Qayma admitted going along as spectators to the *toro tinkus*, no one from the village ever took part themselves. But the traces of recent history remained – young Pedro took me to his room one day and showed me a collection of oxhide helmets (*monteras*) used during *tinku* battles, which once belonged to his father. No longer used or kept safe by their original owner, Don Tomás, they now had pride of place in this teenage boy's room.

The ban on using alcohol ritualistically and *fiestas* brings us to the final threat Protestantism is said to pose: the breakdown of sociality between people and land. Carter and Mamani (1989) specifically emphasise religious rituals, including coca, as vital for the creation of a relationship with the supernatural. Despite the retention of the *cargo* system and continued usage of coca leaves, along with the many other ways discussed in which people in P'iya Qayma do not conform to Baptist doctrine, there are no more large

⁷⁹ As described in Chapter 4, Doña Valeriana is an originario of P'iya Qayma whilst her husband is an originario from Coyuma. For this reason, Doña Valeriana's parents are remembered in P'iya Qayma.

⁸⁰ The *toro tinkus* took place over a number of months with the winners progressing to the next level. A big final in Bolívar included bulls and their owners from Potosí. In fact the ruling champion, 'El Diablo' came from San Pedro de Buenavista a small town in northern Potosí renowned for its *toro tinkus*.

fiestas or overt religious rituals aimed at communicating with the land.

The linking of the agricultural calendar with ritual and sacrifice is clear in the Catholic villages of the Andes. As Harris puts it; 'In Laymi culture land is paramount; humans must serve the land both directly by cultivating it and through worship of the telluric spirits' (Harris 2000: 30). Henry Stobart (2000, 2006) has detailed the close relationship between the agricultural year and music, dance and ritual, as an all-encompassing way of engaging with the land. As Stobart (2006) has described it in Kalankira in *ayllu* Macha, Northern Potosi, music and ritual is not simply a mode of reflection on the natural processes of growth and production but is integral to the productive powers of the land, involving specific instruments tied to times of the year and corresponding agricultural tasks. This route of communication between people and land has ceased in P'iya Qayma. The guitar was occasionally played by Don Benito in the church and a handful of times I was witness to the playing of the *charango* (manodlin-like instrument), but never in reference to the agricultural events.

The rituals explicitly aimed at the land – the *apus* and the *Pachamama*, and in particular sacrifices – have been described and understood through the idiom of feeding and hunger (Allen 1988; Bastien 1978; Fernandez Juarez 1995; Gose 1994; Harris 2006; Isbell 1978; Sax 2011). Ritual foods such as alcohol, coca, dried llama fetuses and human blood spilled in *tinkus* (Sallnow 1987; Harris 2006) are all thought to feed the land. In exchange for feeding the *apus* and the *Pachamama* they oversee health and the wellbeing of crops, animals and people (Sax 2011:37). This ritualistic mode of engaging with the land has been severely scaled back in P'iya Qayma. The only ritual that I was aware of with regard to the land and its fertility was that of chewing coca when awakening virgin soil. And even this had been abandoned by some and was approached with mixed feelings by those who did practise it. Along with a cigarette and a moment of thought, the coca chewing marked the moment of breaking the earth. If no attention whatsoever is paid at this time the harvest will be average, but if a small ritual is performed the harvest will be

plentiful. Don Tomás, emphasising that he does not believe the virgin soil to be *Pachamama*, says that in carrying out this ritual he is paying respect to one of God's creations. He explicitly states that he does not consider his actions idolatrous and that he would never engage in idolatry, but one is led to suspect from his defensive behaviour that he worries that some people might consider them un-Baptist. He says that he is unwilling to forgo this ritual as a big harvest is crucial to survival and he is fairly sure that the land will only produce averagely if he does not chew coca over the virgin soil.

As the opening quote of this chapter illustrates, people in P'iya Qayma consciously stated their abandonment of previous rituals and worship of the land that could be interpreted as idolatry. Considerable efforts were made by my informants to assure me that they were no longer idolatrous, that they understood that there is only one God, and that nothing else should be worshipped.

In particular, people in P'iya Qayma emphasised that *Pachamama* was of no great concern to them any longer, calling it an old superstition: 'There is none of that Pachamama stuff here any longer, only Jesus' said Don Tiburcio. Don Tomás made a similar point:

People still respect *Pachamama* or *Santa Tierra* because from her everyone lives – but God made *Pachamama*, she is not God. When people still talk about *Pachamama*, it's more a thing they say rather than a thing they worship. The traditions we had of worshipping *apus* or *condoris* are completely gone.

What I have described so far of Baptist practice in P'iya Qayma testifies to a situation characterised by a synthesis of Protestant, Catholic and pre-Catholic beliefs and practices. Sociality between people has remained intact but sociality between people and land does at first appear to have been affected. People are no longer 'feeding' the land and no longer acknowledging the power of the *apus* or *Pachamama*. But, as the next section will explore, they have, nonetheless, through agricultural labour, continued to animate the

land.

The killing of Don Facundo and presence of animate land

During my first ten months in P'iya Qayma the evidence suggested that Baptism seemed indeed to have swept away the rituals tied into the agricultural year through which people coax, worship, feed and manage their fields. The relationship with the land appeared to have been altered and there was little acknowledgement of the land as animate and agentive. My understanding of these matters was dramatically altered, however, when, at 1pm on a Monday in April at the comparatively young age of 45, Don Facundo died.

Don Benito as *dirigente* went out to the fields where most of the village was busy harvesting *cañawa*, and informed everyone that there had been a death in the village and work must be suspended. That night Don Facundo's family, along with some men from the village, Don Tomás, Don Benito, Don Calixto and Don Clemente, sat up all night in Don Facundo's house chewing coca, drinking little shots of strong alcohol and smoking cigarettes while talking about Don Facundo – about his illness, his death and memories of his life. Earlier in the evening many of the men in the village visited to pay their respects, but as the kitchen was small only some could stay all night. In the morning the food preparations began. Most men in the village gathered around the body in the inner courtyard, chewing coca and keeping the male relatives company. Meanwhile all the women in the village arrived to help with the food preparations. They sat in a circle outside the house peeling potatoes and *chuño*. Family members, especially the female ones, offered coca leaves, soft drinks and food to everyone present. As is customary when a death occurs, a white llama was slaughtered to feed the funeral party. At midday the coffin was brought out from the inner courtyard.⁸¹ As the coffin

⁸¹ This is the first time that anyone from the village has been buried in a coffin. It was purchased by one of Don Facundo's sons in Oruro, he had arrived with it a few weeks before the death as Don Facundo's health had deteriorated to a point where death seemed the most likely outcome. Usually the body is carried to the cemetery on a ladder, the body is then lowered into the ground on the ladder and buried on it.

emerged the women began to cry and wail. The children, shocked by the sudden outbursts from their mothers, followed suit.

It was mainly men who went to the cemetery with the body. Apart from the family members, I was the only woman present and I found myself wondering whether my presence was appropriate. Don Tomás assured me that I was welcome and that the only reason the other women were not there was because they had to attend to the meal preparations. I was ushered through the cemetery to where the pit was being dug. Fruit juice, coca leaves and cigarettes were offered to all by Don Facundo's family. The men took turns digging out the hole for the coffin. We stood for more than an hour in the midday sun, slowly chewing our coca leaves, feeling our mouths go numb as the active alkaloid ingredient seeped out of the leaves and was then absorbed by our flesh, and we watched as the hole was made deeper, wider and longer. The family, including its male members, cried violently as the coffin was lowered into the ground. The oldest son, Don Francisco, who just a moment earlier had been conversing very happily with me, now fell to his knees wailing. A bundle was thrown into the pit alongside the coffin. It included everything Don Facundo might need: his hat, some clothes, his herding whip, his cutting knife, his coca purse, food and a little money. As soon as the coffin was lowered everyone spat their now well chewed coca into the burial pit. When the hole was filled in, a little mound was made and two poles were banged into the ground at the head and foot of the coffin. Then all the men went to fetch sun-dried sand from a nearby pit which they poured over the grave. A local Baptist deacon, the godfather of Don Facundo's marriage, arrived from a nearby village, and standing by the grave he led those assembled in prayer. The deacon had brought a small bottle of neat alcohol with him from which he was sipping throughout the ceremony in the cemetery. I saw him offer it to several other people, some of whom accepted, while others declined. By the end of his prayer it was clear that he must have consumed most of the bottle himself as he was plainly drunk. When the prayer ended everyone left the cemetery rather hastily. Walking along the dry slopes back to Don Facundo's house the atmosphere was relaxed and

several men commented that the burial had gone well and that they were ready for some food.

The burial ceremony at the graveyard included both Baptist and non-Baptist practice. It did not explicitly invoke *Pachamama*, or any deity other than the Christian God, and no libations were poured. However, pre-Baptist customs were in evidence: chewed coca leaves were spat into the grave, and Don Facundo was sent on his way with a bundle of his possessions. Further pre-Baptist practice was the presence of drink. Had the burial taken place in a Catholic village alcohol would have been flowing freely. In contrast, this funeral was a sober affair, yet the presence of the drunken deacon left no one perturbed and in fact a handful of people did accept his invitation of a short drink.

Back at the house the women had been cooking furiously. The men sat down in the yard. The women, both family members and women from the village, started handing out food to the almost one-hundred-strong crowd, including children, who were now present. First we were given llama and *chuñu* soup. Throughout the afternoon everyone continued to chew coca and smoke cigarettes. The atmosphere was subdued but not depressed or overly heavy with sorrow, and conversation was slow. Not long after the first soup, a second soup, made of potato, *chuñu* and innards, was served. Then two blankets filled with fried bread and toasted maize, corn and barley were brought out and offered. It was getting dark, and the constant stream of food continued. I went and sat with the women. A thin crescent moon lit up the sky but the courtyard was in complete darkness. The house was silhouetted against the moon, only the light from burning cigarette butts revealed where people were sitting, still eating and chewing their coca. The smaller children were falling asleep in their mothers' laps or gently crying from tiredness and cold by their mothers' sides. More bowls of meat and *chuñu* were handed out. Most people put this food away in bags to be eaten at a later date. Then bowls of *quinoa* were served. Doña Nieves brought out a big pot into which she poured the contents of her own and her children's bowls; it would provide a

good breakfast for the next day. As she finished cleaning the plates with her fingers and licking the last drops from her index finger with calm efficiency, she gathered her things and children and got ready to take her leave. A few of the other women also rose and made moves to go, and within about ten minutes almost everyone had begun their walk home, including me.

In the days after Don Facundo's death people began to discuss what had happened. Don Tomás and his wife, Doña Nieves, told me that Don Facundo was a mean man. He was unfriendly and tight with his money. I was told that he was one of the richest men in P'iya Qayma, with plenty of money, animals and land. The gossip about Don Facundo began to flow: he had been mean to his children, friends, neighbours, extended family and strangers – as a result he was disliked by most. When Don Facundo died, Don Tomás had asked Don Facundo's sons if they wanted to go to the cemetery to scare Don Facundo's soul back into his body. When someone is dying their soul may leave the body in advance of the death and go ahead to the cemetery. If relatives at this time go to the cemetery with their *chiquotes* (whips) and coca and small amounts of alcohol, it is possible to whip and scare the unburied soul back into the body, this prevents it from wandering and causing harm to the living (cf Van Vleet 2008: 87; Gose 1994: 117). Don Tomás told me that in his time they had 'saved' many people this way. But Don Facundo's sons declined the offer and Don Tomás interpreted this as a clear sign that the dying man had lost the love and respect of his sons. Don Facundo's last words, uttered in delirium before he altogether stopped speaking were 'The donkey is running away with my money.' In P'iya Qayma people whispered this, his last sentence, amongst themselves, shocked by such a final proof of his paranoia and greed.

In addition to his reputation as a mean and miserly man, Don Facundo was also widely recognised as a *curandero* (Q) (*yatiri* in Aymara); a person with the powers to heal. He was gifted at reading the present, past and future in coca leaves, he offered advice to those in trouble and remedies to the ill, he could even cure people by simply touching them. His powers had been kept

secret from me, and though I had heard rumours about them it was not until his death that people began to speak of them more openly. The day after Don Facundo's funeral Don Tomás explained to me that Don Facundo had been in contact with the mountains, the *apus*, and from them he had gained his powers and his riches, and, he added a matter of factly, it was the *apu* that had now killed Don Facundo: '*El sonqo de Don Facundo, este apu, mikhurqa*' (The mountain ate his heart). And with a single sentence, the religious world of P'iya Qayma completely changed for me: the *apus* were still there, and they had the power to kill.

While rituals tied to the agricultural year and sacrifices were no longer common practice in P'iya Qayma, the land around them had nonetheless retained its agency. The continual presence of agentive land indicates a continued interest in what it does. Although people do not necessarily believe that the land around them is full of sacred deities that demand worship, this does not mean that they believe the powers have disappeared, in fact the land constantly flexed its powers in the production or destruction of food. I now began an investigation into peoples' beliefs regarding Don Facundo's death and found that a vast majority of people in P'iya Qayma were convinced that the *apu* rising behind P'iya Qayma village, Wayna Tanka, had indeed killed Don Facundo. The reasons why, the nature of his relationship with the *apu*, the nature and source of his abilities as a *curandero*, and the character of the *apu*, varied between testimonies. While the enduring presence and power of the *apus* is clear, certain aspects of the relationship with the land, mainly those concerning worship, have evidently changed from what the literature on Catholic *ayllus* documents. What also became clear was the variability of beliefs on whether a Baptist life requires and involves the repudiation of beliefs and practices relating to the mystical character of the land. Just as some villagers chew coca while others abstain, some believe more strongly in the powers of the land, and feel compelled to chew coca over virgin land, while others are more sceptical.

Don Facundo's position of relative wealth and the fact that he was regarded

an ungenerous person who had alienated a majority of people around him is notable in that it parallels the perception that Catholics have of Protestant converts. His death was almost certainly associated with the relationship he had with the *apu*, and all the accounts I was privy to expressed the opinion that accumulation of wealth was Don Facundo's motivation for entering into this dangerous liaison with the *apu*. Just as the Catholics fear they are not 'real' Catholics and as such will not go to heaven, the ethnographic evidence indicates that people in P'iya Qayma worry that unnatural accumulation is unchristian and punishable by, in this case, death. The place of agentive land and the perception that people have of their own religious identity is often contradictory.

The speculative stories about the cause of Don Facundo's death all began in the same way. One night, several months back, Don Facundo and his wife, Doña Efrasina, climbed Wayna Tanka, the high peak that looms over the village of P'iya Qayma. Nobody knew, or admitted to knowing, exactly why they went or what they did on the top of Wayna Tanka, but it was widely regarded as odd. Even stranger, apparently, was that the couple made it up to the top and back down again with extraordinary speed in the pitch black of night. It was generally believed that on that night the mountain ate Don Facundo's heart, and that it was the following morning he first showed the signs of the illness that led to his death. Another matter that was much discussed was that Don Facundo had known he was going to die, he had told his wife many times during the months leading up to his illness and death that he would be leaving soon and that she would have to carry on by herself. Many people also agreed that Don Facundo appeared to have changed in the months leading up to his death, he had become kinder and more generous.

Don Tomás, cited earlier as claiming that the traditions of worshipping *apus* and *condoris* no longer exist in P'iya Qayma, was the first person to utter the words 'the mountain ate his heart'. When I asked Don Tomás again if *apus* still existed, he admitted that this was the case. As I re-read what he had said, I realised that he had in fact never denied the existence of the *apus* and

Pachamama, only that they were no longer worshipped. I had made an assumption about the relationship between that which has power and that which is communicated with through the mode of sacrifice and ritual. There is a discontinuity in modes and techniques of engagement with the land, but a continuity of conviction that things exist and have power to act on humans. The *apus* are still there.

There were varied explanations and thoughts regarding the power of the mountain. For instance, Don Tomás explained to me that the *apu* had not been chastising Don Facundo or seeking some kind of revenge, rather it was God who had punished Facundo for his ungenerous way and dubious relations with the *apu*, as ‘God sees and hears everything’. So the *apu* was, by Don Tomás, awarded the role of executioner while God was the mastermind behind the execution.

Doña Filomena, Don Tomás’ sister, expressed her apprehensions about Don Facundo’s dealings with the *apu*. She did not approve of whatever relationship Don Facundo had had with the *apu*; she thought it very unwise to try and harness the power of the mountain as your own, or engage with the mountains at all in this abnormal way, and stated that it was not surprising that something bad had in the end befallen him. She suggested that Don Facundo ‘had it coming to him’ since being ‘in league’ with the mountains is a dangerous thing – it can be profitable and award powers, but the mountain can at any time claim its price. She hastened to add that not everybody is at risk of being taken by the mountains, that we did not need to fear for our lives but that this should be a lesson to us that we ought to stick with God. Like Don Tomás, Doña Filomena accepts the existence and power of the *apu*, but adds that it is a choice to be loyal to the Christian deity rather than engaging in illicit conversation with the *apu*.

Don Tiburcio and Doña Casimira were the only villagers who were not convinced that the mountain had killed Don Facundo. Don Tiburcio agreed that Don Facundo got his powers from the mountains but, he said, he was not

sure why Don Facundo had died. Shrugging, he told me: 'only God knows that.' Similarly, Doña Casimira reiterated that God was the only one who knew what had really happened.

Through all these conversations in P'iya Q'ayma regarding the death of Don Facundo, however, there was no hint of the notion, which Harris noted among the Laymi, that it was the failure to feed the hungry mountains and land with blood and animal sacrifice that had resulted in the land claiming human life (cf Harris 2006), in this sense their perception of the character of the mountain has altered since Catholic days. Don Facundo was not seen to be a sacrifice taken by the mountain as a result of the village having lapsed in its duty to feed the mountain. There was no suggestion of communal guilt or fear that another villager might be next, in fact many people reassured me that we were all safe. People did not experience their suspension of sacrifice and ritual as a failing on their part with regards the 'feeding' of the land. Instead, the blame was placed on Don Facundo personally, it was his specific relationship with the mountain and the arrangements he had made with it that resulted in his death. Neither was the *apu* cast in a role as devil, as has been described as the fate of other pre-Christian deities in convert communities in other parts of the world (cf Meyer 1995, 1999) While it was generally agreed that Don Facundo's relationship with the *apu* had been transgressive, the powers he had been awarded were not completely shunned, but rather employed by people in quotidian life. For instance, Don Tomás claimed to have paid Don Facundo on several occasions, in exchange for information regarding the whereabouts of an animal which had strayed too far. While agricultural labour is condoned as a 'Christian' way of engaging with the land, following on from the link between work and the Catholic conversion, as described in Chapter 4, Don Facundo's mode of engagement was not deemed totally antiethical to Christianity and most villagers had employed his abilities to help them in their everyday life. So the *apu* is both a source of dramatic and dangerous events and simultaneously everyday and uncontroversial powers.

It is clear that people in P'iya Qayma were somewhat uneasy about the continued agency of the mountain, but simultaneously accepted it as an everyday presence. Tension, ambiguity and contradiction characterise religious life in the *ayllu* village. Why does the mountain still retain this agency, why has the earth not been purged of divine power as Christianity and particular Protestantism demands (cf Allerton 2009a; Cannell 2006: 14) and how have people maintained their relationship with the land when they no longer communicate through religious rituals and sacrifice? I contend that it is because agricultural labour ties people to the land, they come face to face with its powers of production and reproduction every day, and through their own bodily toil they transform and are in constant conversation with the land.

The vernacular power of land

Through *llank'ay* the land is continuously fuelled, fed, and transformed, and thus animated, despite the lack of overt rituals. This animated land is both productive in a vernacular sense and, at times, such as when the *apu* killed Don Facundo, in a more dramatic sense. However, I suggest that these seemingly diametrically opposed ways of being agentive, one apparently profane and the other sacred, are in fact not so different. Instead, both are simply examples of what the land does, of the vernacular power of land.

In order to unpack the various ways agentive land is thought of, I describe the agency of land in P'iya Qayma in two senses. This is simply for the sake of explanation; in reality, as I have stated above, they are all part of the one holistic agentive character of land.

The first sense I refer to as a 'baseline' agency that land in the *ayllu* is seen to have. It is the constant, productive land that makes potatoes, freezes and dries them, feeds animals, makes the grass and bushes grow, creates shade and protection, lets the springs run to provide water and create pools, and so on. This everyday agency, the fact that places have effects on the world, has been highlighted by several theorists (e.g. Allerton 2009a, 2009b; Giddens

1984; Ingold 2000, 2007a, 2007b). This power to produce is not taken for granted in P'iya Qayma – the cultural recognition of this productiveness as something remarkable is instrumental to why people come to perceive the land around them as agentive. The ability for the land to produce as it does is seen as a blessing, and it is also seen as directly related to the labour invested to transform the land. It is the efforts of people in transforming the land which enable the land to be productive, and as such agentive, in the sense of having an effect on the world. The relationship of people to this agentive land and the key position of *llank'ay* in this relationship is pointed to in the title of Harris's book (2000) *To make the earth bear fruit*. As Gose puts it: 'They grow the crops to make the earth come alive' (1994:3). From this perspective the agency of the earth, its ability to produce, is created through the interaction of people and land, through *llank'ay* (cf Povinelli 1995). Eliade (1957 cited in Harris 2000:211) has noted that cults of earth mothers seem to arise more commonly in agricultural societies rather than hunter gathering ones. Harris suggests that this might be because rather than being organised around the 'natural' productiveness of the land, these cults are focused on the act of penetration through cultivation (2000:211). Thus Harris highlights the role of labour in the relationship constructed with the land and even in the veneration of land.

This first sense of agency is activated by human effort, *llank'ay*. In P'iya Qayma, the positive correlation of *llank'ay* and the land's ability to produce is explicit in villagers' descriptions of their relationship with the land, as noted in Chapter 3. The act of *llank'ay* enables the landscape to become agentive and set about producing the 'blessings' of the Andean world. In this process, *llank'ay*, just as it creates *runakuna*, also produces the agentive land.

The second sense of agency with which people experience the land around them to be imbued is a more conscious one: it includes motivation and intention. The first, base-line agency, and this second sense of agency, do not necessarily contradict each other. However, this kind of conscious agency, with its more spectacular attributes, sometimes eclipses the agency of

quotidian production. It is thus necessary to bring attention to, and bear in mind, the baseline aspect. Both senses are ingredients in the make-up of the total agency that land has. This second, conscious, agency is manifest to people not only through the land's ability to control its production of foodstuffs but also through the powers it exerts, which extend beyond the agricultural sphere to that of human mortality.

In Catholic areas, as well as occasionally in P'iya Qayma, these powers are thought of in terms of ancestor spirits (*achachilas*), as personified in geographical features (*apus*) and the more opaque *Pachamama* (see Canessa 2012; Gose 1994; Harris 2000).⁸² Both senses of agency demand engagement, but this second one can appear far more urgent and demanding. As Harvey argues, 'the landscape self-evidently has agency (intentionality and capacity for autonomous action) and must be actively engaged if that agency is to be directed favourably towards human endeavour' (2001: 198). Obvious ways in which people engage and communicate with these powerful surroundings are through the medium of rituals and sacrifice, topics which have been extensively covered in the anthropological literature on the Andes (see Allen 1988; Canessa 2012 Harris 2000, Rasnake 1988 etc). However, P'iya Qayma is a Baptist village and many of these activities have been scaled back and deemed idolatrous. Instead, the role of *llank'ay* has been extended to engage not just with the land in order to make it produce, but also in order to relate

⁸² In this analysis I avoid identifying *Pachamama* as *the* productive and vernacular landscape, instead, due to her intentional agency, I locate her within the second 'sense of agency.' *Pachamama* is arguably the best known Andean 'deity' whose power is described as both that of general productiveness and that of a more bounded deity with anthropomorphic elements. Harris (2000) argues that the place of *Pachamama* in the Andean pantheon is not clear. She was become a major symbol for the national IRMs and mobilised in their interest as she appears to resonate with global IRMs and green movements. In Kirkiyaw, *Pachamama* was occasionally mentioned, both in the Catholic and Protestant villages. In the Catholic villages libations are regularly poured in her name. She is most commonly engaged with when a field is brought out of fallow and at times of sowing and harvest - through rituals and sacrifice (Harris 2000:207). Her local character is simultaneously one of fertility and generosity, and also one of aggression. At times she refuses to produce with disastrous consequences (Harris 2000). Harris suggests that the femininity assigned to *Pachamama* in the Andes is not related to her fertility but rather to the fact she is domesticated and penetrated by the act of cultivation (Harris 2000:211). As Harris points out, the word *mama* is used in Aymara and Quechua communities and in the bi-lingual urban suburbs to refer to women (or madam) in general, not only those who are actually mothers. Therefore it should not be assumed then that *Pachamama* is motherly, whatever the culturally specific understandings of motherliness.

to the more conscious and intentional agentive elements. *Llank'ay* has become the main way in which people engage with land in order to promote a smooth relationship – they perform *llank'ay* ‘well’ (*sumaj*), not only in order to ensure bountiful harvests, but also to celebrate and placate chthonic powers. In working the land ‘well’ they make efforts such as ensuring it is not abandoned (as will be explored in Chapter 7), providing it with sufficient time in fallow, and feeding it with plenty of manure.

In order to bring these two senses of agency together, and describe it as people in P'iya Qayma perceive it, I employ the term ‘vernacular landscape’ (Allerton 2009a:5). This connects all the powers of the land to the main mode with which people engage with it, agricultural labour. As Allerton has pointed out: ‘To speak of ‘sacred landscapes’ would imply a perception of the environment set apart from the profane activities of daily life’ (2009a:5). Allerton demonstrates that an examination of spiritual landscape interrogates the separation of the natural from the supernatural. The spirit-beings and energies that are part of many Southeast Asian spiritual landscapes are engaged with as an intrinsic, everyday aspect of those landscapes, rather than as paranormal or unnatural phenomena (Allerton 2009a). As Ingold also suggests, agency does not necessarily imply ‘magical mind-dust’ (Ingold 2007:11), nor is it predicated on will or intention, instead it is simply about ‘doing’ (Giddens 1984:10). This line of analysis, on the topic of agentive land, has been partly explored in the Andean context through the prism of kinship. The fairly well-documented usage of kin terms in reference to animal, vegetable mineral and landscape in the Amazon (Chaumeil & Chaumeil 2005) and the hills and highlands of Latin America (Allen 1988, Canessa 2012, Sax 2011) suggests inclusion of these non-humans into the familial, everyday, non-divine world. Both the theories of Perspectivism advanced by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1998, 1992) and Animism as described by Philippe Descola (1996, 1992), speak of agentive land and animals as part of the human world, not as creatures of a separate sacred realm. In light of this literature the concept of the vernacular landscape is useful for understanding both Protestant settings and Catholic communities.

The fact that overt religious rituals are not necessary to maintain the presence of the land tells us something about how the agentive land is perceived. While chthonic powers may have been incorporated, or even smuggled into, local Catholic practice through the cult of the Saints, this does not necessarily imply that they are analogous to Saints. If we entertain the idea that the *apu* might be perceived as kin rather than a telluric Saint then labour exchange seems a very apt and satisfying way to conduct a relationship with it. In addition the re-valorisation of rural life and work since the conversion may lend even more weight to the agricultural labour as a legitimate way in which Baptists communicate with the still animate land. Of course, the vernacular landscape is a contested space, with disagreements regarding the best way to act within it, both in terms Protestant ideals, and in terms of maximising production.

Conclusion

The effects of Protestant conversion in the Andean highlands cannot readily be summed up as either destructive or empowering to *ayllu* life. For one, the Protestant churches, or rather their specific representatives with whom the rural population engage, are not homogeneously intolerant as might be feared, but open to compromise. People in P'iya Qayma have both consumed in a manner that transforms the Baptist practice, and constructed a cosmology with the pieces made available to them. Moreover, even when a converted population abandons older ritual forms, many taken-for-granted notions regarding spirits and their places may be retained (Forth 1998 cited in Allerton 2009a). Apart from the fact that Protestantism has had multiple outcomes within one setting, its impact varies from locality to locality as it finds itself in varied contexts, depending on historical experience and the specificities of encounters with missionaries. So, the Amerindianisation of Protestantism does not simply have one shape, but rather thousands of local versions are created. In P'iya Qayma alcohol consumption has been scaled back but coca chewing continued along with *padrinazgo* and *compadrazgo*. Conversion can also be interpreted as having been complementary to *ayllu*

traditions or even had an empowering effect through its emphasis and valorisation of work and in particular agricultural work

There is no doubt that, prior to the conversion, part of the relationship between people and landscape was one of adulation and sacrifice. On the other hand, during my time in P'iya Qayma, religious ritual and sacrificial engagement with the land was clearly minimal. The conversion in P'iya Qayma had seriously affected a main mode of engagement with the land and the chthonic powers. Yet, the chthonic powers remained. And while people had largely ceased overt worship of these powers, they continue to communicate with them and through their labour 'transform' them. The transformation and reciprocal relationship created here through labour is analogous to the transformation and reciprocity created through the acts of ritual feeding as described in the Andean literature. The *apu* can thus be understood as part of a vernacular landscape which does not necessarily require ritual engagement. Instead the vernacular landscape is continually engaged with through *llank'ay*, which activates its agentive character. When the vernacular landscape is full of vitality it powers the more conscious and locality bound agentive land, such as an *apu*. While it is tempting to render the *apu* analogous to a sacred being due to its overt consciousness and ability to perform extreme acts, it is not inevitably experienced as a supernatural or saint-like creature. The act of eating a heart is not necessarily the act of a deity, or an 'unnatural' act. In fact there is no great separation between the power to eat humans and the power to make tubers. The more 'banal' ecological events, such as the power of a river to flood a field, or completely dry it out, are also perceived of as events that spring from an agentive power. All these things are extraordinary but yet not super natural – it is just the way the world works.

In terms of *llank'ay*, this chapter has explored its role in the production of an animate landscape. As we have seen *llank'ay* is not just a form of work which produces the necessities of life, but alongside *runakuna* it also animates a vernacular landscape to such an extent that it infuses it with extraordinary

agency, including the power to kill.

Chapter 6: 'Being a *jilanqo* is like ploughing a field – it is *llank'ay*' – The *ayllu*, the union and non-agricultural work

'*El ayllu – es todo esto*' (the *ayllu* is all of this), Don Tiburcio said, waving his arms around, as we stood on the edge of his part-harvested potato field, the sun now low in the sky. '*Tambien, el sindicato y los jilanqos es*' (it is also the union and the *jilanqos*), he added. When I asked him again to tell me more about what the *ayllu* is, he shrugged and simply repeated – '*tukuy esto es*' (it is all this).

A vast majority of 'work' that people undertake in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí is agricultural in nature but this is not the only form of work which is conceptualised as *llank'ay*. In Chapters 3 and 4, I argued that the notion of *llank'ay* is rooted in agricultural activity and the transformation of the land. However, as this chapter will show, the concept is also extended to embrace non-agricultural tasks in non-*ayllu* spheres, which transform land. In Kirkiyawí, activities that are considered *llank'ay* and part of the pathway of *thaki* include experiences and responsibilities such as positions of authority in the *ayllu* and in the union, as well as working with NGOs. This type of effort is appreciated as a valid contributor to a person's *runa*-hood. I also show that people conflate local union structures with those of the local *ayllu*, and how the two overlap in their local organisations. In an analysis of which activities are defined as *llank'ay*, and which are not, and discussion over the ways people conflate local institutions, I further investigate the nature and role of *llank'ay*. I conclude that the reason these activities are all given status as *llank'ay*, rather than being clearly differentiated from each other, is down to the inclusive character of the concept of *llank'ay* - activities that transform land.⁸³ Activities are defined as *llank'ay* according to the extent to which these experiences and responsibilities are positively connected to the

⁸³ However, as Chapter 7 will elaborate, there are limits to what is considered *llank'ay* and these limits relate to the power of the work to transform the land lived on in the *ayllu*

transformation of land.

The relationship between the various organisations present in rural areas, and in particular the union and the *ayllu*, is sometimes described by the leaders of these organisations as being acrimonious, or at least strained, due to divergent ideological goals and motivations (see Lucero 2006; Rivera Cusicanqui 1987; Schilling-Vacaflor 2008; Van Cott 2003). Canessa (2006b: 242) argues that the rhetoric employed by some of these leaders is influenced by NGOs and international agencies and may be quite different to the attitudes and perception of their own identity, as expressed by rural people. Building on Canessa's point, this chapter illustrates that local interaction between the *ayllu* and other organisations is less about ideology and politics than about the everyday, and in particular about everyday efforts to transform the land.

Though different groups claiming to represent the Bolivian poor have divergent visions for the future development of the country, these divisions are not clearly present at the village levels. The evidence from P'iya Qayma and the wider *ayllu* of Kirkiyawí shows that most people are members of both the *ayllu* and the union; they neither make significant distinctions between the *ayllu* and union leaders nor show much concern for debates of class versus ethnicity or what the de-colonisation of Bolivia really signifies or should signify. They speak of experiencing a general solidarity with all poor and indian Bolivians – the miners, lowlanders and urban migrants. A phrase I often heard used was '*todos somos campesinos, todos somos originarios*' (we are all peasants, we are all original people).⁸⁴

In everyday life in Kirkiyawí, the *ayllu* is not conceptualised as pristine and separate from other organising institutions, rather it is fluid and inclusive. The work undertaken by *ayllu* members in the name of non-*ayllu* institutions is valued as *llank'ay*. The local union and *ayllu* authorities fulfil similar roles

⁸⁴ The word *originario* is most commonly used to refer to highland indigenous groups and the word *indígena* employed when discussing the lowland groups. So by employing the term *originario* there is an implicit exclusion of lowland indigenous groups.

within the villages. Women and men who take up leadership roles within municipal organisations – such as the *junta escolar* (union of parents of school children) the *comité de vigilancia* (vigilance committee), as well as those who form relationships with NGOs and are nominated as the local *liders* (leaders) in charge of specific development projects – attain a similar status and role in the village to that of the *ayllu* authorities.⁸⁵ I argue that these responsibilities outside the *ayllu* structure are of equal value to those within the structure because they are regarded as *llank'ay*; their efforts ultimately result in the transformation of land. The concept of *llank'ay* covers a wide range of activities which can be seen to be assisting with such transformation. All activities which bring resources to the *ayllu* and make life there possible, or improve it, are directly assisting people in achieving this goal. Some political activity enables the transformation of land very obviously through structural projects, such as the building of an irrigation system or the creation of a dam. Others are less obvious but nonetheless support the *ayllu* inhabitants in their task of transforming the land, such as the construction of a solar panel which allows for large communal meetings in the evenings where communal agricultural work may be organised. And those who engage in *llank'ay* are developing their *runa-hood*, travelling along the path of *thaki*, engaging in a relationship with the land and experiencing communality.

This chapter begins by mapping out the historical and political context of the current relationship between the *ayllu* and the union. The organisation of the *ayllu* was detailed in the Introduction; this first section will add a description of the organisation of the union and the local government. A second section will then discuss the claimed rift between the two organisations, in particular this rift is detailed from the perspective of the *ayllu* activist *Mallku* Sabino Veizaga. An analysis of the local reception of *Mallku* Sabino demonstrates that the rift which he imagines exists between the *ayllu* and the union, is not

⁸⁵ The parents' union was created alongside the inter-cultural bi-lingual education reforms of 1994. The vigilance committee is a policing body that was set up in the 1990s as part of LPP. It is made up of local people and attached to every municipality in order oversee municipal and governmental work

paralleled in the minds of other villagers. Instead, as the final section will detail, the divergent goals of the *ayllu* and union, which matter among the leaders of these groups, are of far less importance in the local context. So insignificant is this distinction that the two are conflated. This conflation is enabled by the concept of *llank'ay*, which renders most efforts within the *ayllu* structure and efforts within the union structure categorically equal.

Historical and political context

The present relationship between the *ayllu* and union is embedded in a wider context, including local and central government and the history of interaction between all these organisations. As described in the Introduction, rural Bolivia is characterised by layers of both state and non-state administrative units and organisations. People in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí feel affinity and belonging, and identify as a group with all of the organising structures present. At the same time, they are also uninterested in, critical of, and experience disconnection from these same organising structures. They are simultaneously part of the province and municipality of Bolívar, members of the union and people of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí. The IRM in Bolivia and the incumbent president, Evo Morales, have formed a relationship in the public and national sphere which is transforming the previous complex relationship between the *ayllu* and the central state at the discursive level. This, as explained in the Introduction, has over the years included exploitation, disinterest and collusion. Evo Morales incorporates the *ayllu* and indigeneity in general as part of his broader political personality (Canessa 2006b: Dunkerley. 2007). But while people in P'íya Qayma recognise and believe that there has been a change at the very top; they continue to harbour a general suspicion toward the state.

The longer-term backdrop to this is an enduring attitude of apathy towards government, similar to that described by McNeish (2001) amongst the people in the Aymara *ayllu* of Santuario de Quillacas during the implementation of

the Law of Popular Participation (LPP). The present relationship between the rural poor and the government, including local governments, is best understood not simply within the context of recent history and the electoral victory of Evo Morales, but also in light of the themes of long-term history – the allegiances and wars of large polities, fragmentation, state oppression, resistance, loss of land and the fear of losing land, racism and the defence of culture. The memory of what Albó (1987) calls ‘the arc of events’: the persistent attempts by the Bolivian state to ‘modernise,’ privatise and erase *ayllus* from the time of independence to the revolution, the pacts made with governments that were constantly broken and the daily encounter of racism, ethnic differentiation and attack on cultural difference, inform contemporary relationships with local and central government. James Dunkerley (2007:135) has described the suspicion and paranoia experienced by many Bolivians: that outsiders, particularly the United States, will exploit their resources and labour. He calls this the ‘Potosí syndrome.’⁸⁶ In Kirkiyawí various arms of the government are included in this group of ‘outsiders.’ This fear of exploitation was spelled out to me by the many inhabitants of Kirkiyawí who were concerned that the granting of TCO status (*Tierras Comunitarias Origen* – communal land titles based on cultural claims) was in fact the first stage of a secret government initiative to extend property tax to the rural areas.⁸⁷ Historical memory and the still present outcomes of history feed into everyday life and actions. They are part of the unsurprising misgivings felt by indigenous people today towards any government legislation and part of how indigenous people make choices regarding the continuation, change or end of a culturally distinct way of life.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the move to create *campesinos* (peasants) out of indians and support the creation of large unions, was part of the post-revolutionary program of the MNR (Albó 1991). In many highland areas, *ayllu* structures became dormant during the post-revolutionary years in

⁸⁶ The term ‘Potosí syndrome’ refers to the draining of silver from the rich mountain, *cerro rico*, in Potosí by use of local slave labour and subsequent export of the mined riches to Spain, which occurred during the colonial period.

⁸⁷ See Introduction p31 and Chapter 2 pp73, 90-91 for detailed discussion of TCOs.

favour of union structures (Choque and Mamani 2001; Andolina 2003). During the second half of the 1980s and the 1990s a process of re-rehabilitation and re-validation of *ayllu* organisation spread in the Andean region. Much of this wave had its ideological roots in the Katarista movement and was fuelled by a vision of the *ayllu* as a future, alternative and de-colonised modernity (Choque & Mamani 2001). Funding for much of the implementation of LPP and INRA, and assistance with re-constituting lands and establishment of TCOs, came from international donors such as DANIDA (Denmark Foreign Aid Agency), the World Bank, Oxfam America, IBIS-Denmark and Plan International (Lucero 2006). In Oruro department the Campesino Self-development Project (*Proyecto Autodesarrollo Campesino*, PAC), funded by the European Union, supported the strengthening of the *ayllu*, despite a name which suggested union affiliation (Andolina 2003: 129). Suggestions made by, for instance, Canessa (2006b) that indigenous leaders are heavily influenced by international donor discourses regarding 'first people,' are substantiated by the structures of funding for re-rehabilitation of the *ayllu* during this period.

In some areas of highland Bolivia the *ayllu* structure persisted even after the 1952 Revolution, in others the union became the main organiser of people and work and remains so; in yet other places, as described above, the *ayllu* has been rehabilitated. In many localities people oscillate between the two organisations (García, Chavéz 2004). According to the LPP, an area must choose to hold a single legal personality with regards its TCO status: of either *ayllu* or union. Regardless of legal personality, however, both organisations may be present and active within the same area simultaneously. In Kirkiyawí the *ayllu* never retreated completely during the heyday of the union. The neighbouring *ayllus* in northern Potosí are famous as strongholds of *ayllu* culture (Harris 2000; Rivera Cusicanqui 1991) and Kirkiyawí, perhaps due to its proximity to these *ayllus*, also retained its 'traditional' practices. Today the area's legal personality is that of *ayllu* - a unit that includes all Kirkiyawí's inhabitants. They are also, as mentioned, simultaneously, members of

The local organisation of the union parallels that of the *ayllu*. At the village level the union representative, the *dirigente*, is a village member. Just as with the post of the *ayllu* leader, the *jilanqo*, the role is rotated every year among the male residents. The next level up from the village is the *sub-central*. There are fourteen *sub-centrales* in Kirkiyawí, each made up of an average of four villages. Each *sub-central* has a nominated leader but unlike the *ayllu's kuraj tatas* who are all charged with the same kind of work, each *sub-central* has a different area of responsibility, for instance, health, transport, defence of land and so on. The whole municipality of Bolívar corresponds to one *central campesina* – Bolívar. During the period of my fieldwork it was headed by Don Silverio Nina, a local from the village of Villa Verde. All the union posts are filled by local residents. Just like the *ayllu*, the union holds its own monthly meetings and joins in the large municipal meetings. Its post-holders liaise with the municipality on issues such as healthcare, transport and education, and with the *ayllu* on issues such as land and politics. There are no resources which flow via the union, instead their power is rooted in their position as part of the wider federation of unions, the COB. This federation can mobilise huge numbers of people in order to put pressure on central government and, as described in the Introduction, enjoys privileged access to the Morales regime. While neither the union nor the *ayllu* actually invests money in the area, the *dirigentes*, like *jilanqos*, often organise development projects funded by NGOs and the municipality and, as such, are seen to bring resources into the villages.

The increase of IRMs in Bolivia, and regained legitimacy of the *ayllu*, appeared alongside new municipal structures which became prominent when the policy of decentralisation was implemented from the mid-1990s onwards (Andolina 2003). This re-structuring greatly enhanced the budget and power of the *alcaldías* as federal spending became routed through the

⁸⁸ See p 29.

municipal offices rather than the departments and provinces, thus creating new local power centres. The *alcaldías* are now the main conduit through which public services are provided, and in the rural areas they constitute the most direct link to the government. But in 2005, with the election victory of Evo Morales, the relationship between the *ayllu*, *alcaldía* and union changed radically. Although MAS is both a union and an ostensibly socialist party, and although Morales wishes to combine identity and class politics and takes care to not alienate either (Albro 2005), he is nonetheless ultimately viewed as a union man by IRM leaders (in conversation with *Mallku* Sabino Veizaga) and some members of CONAMAQ have gone as far as declaring him an enemy of the indigenous movement (Albro 2006). The municipal offices, the *alcaldía*, are run by elected seats which are mainly filled by the big national political parties, and the newly elected *alcalde*, Don Aniceto Cuti, was also a member of the MAS party. With the union and municipality politically aligned, the *ayllu* leaders in Kirkiyawí consider themselves to be outnumbered (in conversation with *Mallku* Sabino Veizaga).

With this sudden swing to union power both in the government and the *alcaldía*, *ayllu* politics are at risk of being side-lined or at least this is a point that local indigenous leaders like to make (in conversation with *Mallku* Sabino Veizaga). Although indigenous pride and increased equality are cornerstones of the MAS government's manifesto and indeed of the new constitution, the overall project is a class-based one. But the dark-skinned Evo Morales with his peasant background and passionate rhetoric is a symbol that leaves no poor Bolivian Indian untouched: '*Es uno de nosotros*' (He is one of us); '*Conoce cómo sufrimos*' (He knows how we suffer), are claims that I heard countless times. And while many voice dissatisfaction with certain policies or undelivered promises, no one would consider not voting for '*nuestro tata presidente*' (our father and president). As detailed in Chapter 2, the success of Evo Morales as a national leader is in large part due to the fact that he has succeeded in securing the loyalty of both the *ayllu* and the union (Van Cott 2003). Kirkiyawí is one setting where their indivisibility can be clearly seen, but one where, nonetheless, some local IRM leaders sense

that *ayllu* practices and procedures remain in danger of being swamped or side-lined by those pertaining to unionism, class, and politics.

In order to demonstrate the disagreements that do exist between the union and the *ayllu* in terms of ideology, and the divergences in vision which are mainly voiced by the respective groups' leaders, I begin with a section focused on indigenous activist *Mallku* Sabino Veizaga and the reaction to him by the locals of Kirkiyawí. The remainder of the chapter describes the ways in which the work of the *jilano*, *dirigente* and *líders* are seen to transform the land. It demonstrates the everyday conflation of the *ayllu* and union which occurs locally, and illustrates the gap which exists between the political aims and goals of the leaders of these organisations and the purpose which they serve locally. I conclude that this conflation is illustrative of, and in part created by, the local concept of work, *llank'ay*.

The rift between the union and ayllu, and Mallku Sabino Veizaga

While union aims include a strong national industry, decreased influence of foreign companies and a general improvement in wages and public services, which are commensurate with increasing power for the unions themselves, the *ayllu* and its members have a different vision of the future. *Mallku* Sabino Veizaga, an indigenous activist from Kirkiyawí who now works for CONAMAQ, offered a perspective on the relationship between the *ayllu* and the union from the *ayllu* point of view. *Mallku* Sabino's father is an *originario* of P'íya Qayma but he himself was born and raised in his mother's village of Tangaleque and has few ties or friends in P'íya Qayma. Nor is he deeply embedded in relationships of *compadrazgo*, kin or *ayni* in Tangaleque. Instead, he moves within a national and international network of indigenous activists and intellectuals. He travels around Bolivia and to other Latin American countries, liaising with IRMs and organising events such as conferences and rallies. Canessa (2006b: 242) has pointed out that indigenous leaders are often better connected within international than national networks. Somewhat in contradiction to this claim, *Mallku* Sabino is in close contact with Bolivian IRMs and as yet his international engagements

have not surpassed his national work. All his work, however, takes him far away from his home *ayllu*, and although he still has houses in both P'iya Qayma and Tangaleque he has not visited them for years, instead he spends a majority of his time in Cochabamba fulfilling his responsibilities toward CONAMAQ. When he visits Kirkiyawí he only spends a night or two at the location of the meeting he is attending, usually in the village of Bolívar or Wallata Waycha. Although he is a child of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, his notion of what the *ayllu* is, was and could potentially be, does not correspond with how a majority of people now living in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí experience it. The dialogue between *Mallku* Sabino and many of the locals of Kirkiyawí gives us a clear insight into the gap between his version of the *ayllu* and *ayllu* life in Kirkiyawí as it is lived by the local people.

I first met *Mallku* Sabino during one of the monthly *ayllu* meetings. There were around 50 people present in the room that day. A majority were men, but a handful of women were also there. Most of the men at the meeting were the *jilanqo* representatives from their villages, but I also recognised some that were acting *dirigentes* rather than *jilanqos*. Other people present were not official representatives of the *ayllu* or union, but were specifically involved with NGO projects, or were simply active members of their community.

Likewise, a majority of the women at the meeting were not the wives of *jilanqos*, (a role conceptualised as sharing responsibilities with their husbands and normally requiring attendance at *ayllu* meetings), but were NGO appointed leaders or had come to voice specific grievances. As was usual at the meetings I attended, regardless of which institution they represented, the women sat along benches and on the floor on the left-hand side of the room whilst the men all sat in chairs up front, in the middle and to the right. Some children ran in and out of the room during the meeting, sometimes sitting down with their mothers and younger siblings on the floor. The women spread their things out around them. Food for the children was unpacked, infants were lifted off backs and untied from the weaves and

blankets that they were bundled up in and placed on the floor, bags of coca leaves, yarn for spinning and crochet projects were brought out. Considering the many tasks they attend to during the meeting, women's position on the floor, rather than on a chair, seemed appropriate and was similar to their behaviour during lunch breaks while herding. When I asked those seated on the floor why they did not sit on the chairs, they assured me that they found it far easier to sit on the floor. So while women certainly speak less than their male counterparts at these meetings and were always numerically marginal, the seating structure is not necessarily a reflection of subordination.

Women appear, however, to engage far less in these more political *llank'ay* activities than in the agricultural ones where they perform in equal measure to the men. Possibly they are in part restricted within this arena due to issues of language, as a working level of Spanish is required in the interaction with many NGOs and the municipality. However, their limited activity is certainly bound up in complex structures and ideas that define the roles of men and women, possibly including, and most definitely going beyond, complementarity. I do not enter into a detailed gender analysis here as there is simply no space to discuss all connected topics, and I have chosen to prioritise an analysis of actions defined as *llank'ay* within the political arena.

Mallku Sabino was given a prominent position in the room and was a great deal more active during the meeting than *Cacique* Vincente Arias. There was a table at the top of the room behind which both men sat. Along the wall behind the table and the wall running along the right hand side of the room were two benches on which the *kuraj tatas* sat. Between the two benches the staffs that the top *ayllu* authorities carry, referred to in Kirkiyawí as *tata santísimo*, were balanced against each other to create a pyramid shape; beneath the pyramid every *kuraj tata*, the *cacique* and the *mallku* placed handfuls of coca from their own bags. *Mallku* Sabino spoke with great authority and eloquence of '*autonomía indígena original*'. He told his audience that the government and the new constitution promised departmental, provincial, municipal and indigenous autonomy. He went on to

say that they now finally have legal rights to indigenous autonomy, that it was theirs for the taking. '*Ahora es el momento*' (Now is the moment), he commanded his fairly uninterested audience, '*a descolonizar Bolivia y reconstituir las naciones Aymara*' (to de-colonise Bolivia and rebuild the Aymara nations). Whilst I was impressed by his intensity and presence, the rest of the room appeared somewhat distracted. Talking quietly about other things and busying themselves with their coca leaves, they did not present themselves as potential revolutionaries. A few of the men entered into a half-hearted discussion with *Mallku* Sabino – they were unsure about indigenous autonomy, what about the municipality and *Alcalde* Aniceto, what about the union? *Mallku* Sabino grew ever more frustrated as his audience paid him less and less attention. *Cacique* Vincente who was sitting at the front of the room, behind a large table, to the right of the now standing *Mallku* Sabino, was looking at his mobile phone. The phone was in a plastic bag and had no chance of getting any reception in this part of the village, yet *Cacique* Vincente appeared far more engrossed by it than by the words of *Mallku* Sabino. Several of the *kuraj tatas* on the bench were more concerned with the balance of the staff pyramid and whether there was enough coca on the mat underneath it. Someone in the room wanted to discuss the upkeep of a recently constructed but ill-functioning irrigation system in the village of Molle Pongo. This was strictly speaking a matter for the municipal office and *Mallku* Sabino dismissed the question, saying they would have to ask the municipal engineers. The man was clearly annoyed at his topic being regarded as inappropriate to the occasion. Indeed, at other *ayllu* meetings which I had attended that *Mallku* Sabino had not been present at, topics similar to this had readily been discussed. The meeting continued for two hours. It ended rather anticlimactically as one by one people began to leave, eventually those of us who were left spilled into an adjoining courtyard to eat some food prepared by a few of the women in the village.

I introduced myself to *Mallku* Sabino, who had already noticed me during the meeting and appeared excited and pleased at my presence. We spoke for many hours that evening. We also met several times during the course of the

following months, in the bigger village of Bolívar and in Cochabamba at his CONAMAQ offices but never in P'iya Qayma. He is short of stature and has a calm yet charismatic presence: whenever I met him he was dressed in the full attire of a *mallku* – a poncho (his was pink and green), a crochet *ch'ullo* hat, his sacred staff - *tata santísimo*, a pouch for coca leaves – *ch'uspa*– hanging round his neck, and implausibly clean beige chinos.⁸⁹ A clever and enthusiastic man, he eagerly shared his thoughts and beliefs with me, along with much material on the work of CONAMAQ.

Primarily, he felt a frustration that *ayllu* people were not seizing this moment in history to transform Bolivia into a place oriented around *ayllu* life and values as opposed to capitalism. The present moment, he argued, constitutes a unique moment to really de-colonise Bolivia, to shake off the consciousness of the colonised, the inferiority complex and the racism - to really re-build the country. He believed that de-colonisation is Evo Morales' most important job, but doubts that he will have the will or ability to take it far enough. Although he acknowledged that the unions have done much good he believed that ultimately they are a white peoples' organisation and morally and spiritually inferior to the *ayllu*.

The union is not an organisation that is about the whole person or about culture and becoming a person, the *ayllu* is everything. For instance in order to be a *jilanqo* you have to be a married man, you have to be complete, but anyone can become a union leader, it is not concerned with the real development of people.

Mallku Sabino

What *ayllu* ideologues like *Mallku* Sabino want is very different from what the union wants, *Mallku* Sabino explained to me. Unions are often grounded in Marxist theory and are class-based, he said. Ultimately, *Mallku* Sabino envisions a disintegration of the Bolivian state, complete autonomy for the *ayllus*, an end to capitalism in Bolivia and, he added rather quietly, the

⁸⁹ *Ch'ullo* (Aymara) Crochet Andean pointy hat with ear-flaps. *Ch'uspa* (Quechua) woven pouches for coca leaves, often carried round the neck on a string, mainly used by men. Most commonly for men and women *coca* leaves were carried in the green plastic bags which they are usually sold in at the markets

expulsion of the non-indigenous population, starting with the Mennonites. (There are about 60 000 Russian Mennonites currently living in Bolivia, mainly in the Chaco region in the department of Santa Cruz. They live in isolated colonies and apart from a trade in cheese have little to do with the wider population). After this de-colonisation the erection of indigenous nations can begin - it will be *Pachakuti*, Mallku Sabino told me. The term *Pachakuti* is in regular use in *ayllu* movements. It refers to a new time, a revolution and simultaneously the recreated place. As described in Chapter 3, *Pacha* is a word that invokes both space and time, the future and the past, and is also used to emphasise specificity and limits. *Kuti* signifies and the return of what once was (Boussey-Cassagne & Harris 1987; Canessa 2000; Rivera Cusicanqui 1991).

Mallku Sabino explained that their ancestors fought and died for this land and today they are so close to winning. But the government, and many indigenous people, he adds exasperatedly, are not prepared to go all the way, their loyalties to the indigenous cause do not run as deep as he would wish. He feels a great sense of frustration. He says he loves Evo but that Evo will not deliver these things, he is only the first step on a long journey. Other CONAMAQ members have been more openly critical of Evo, accusing him of selling out on the indigenous cause and declaring him an enemy of the indigenous movement (Statement by CONAMAQ 2006, cited in Albró 2006). CONAMAQ claims to be a bottom-up organisation, democratic due to rotation, authentically indigenous and possessing historical legitimacy (Andolina 2003). They accuse the unions of being a top-down organisation, governed by the elites of political parties. As there is no automatic rotation of responsibility and power within the higher echelons of the union structure, the *ayllu* movement regards it a western and 'modern' organisation (Andolina 2003: 144). Evo, they claim, though affirming pride in his indigenous heritage, is committed not to the survival of the indian but rather to the rights of the *campesino*. He is likewise criticised by the more radical in the union ranks, for instance by the separatist Felipe Quispe, leader of the CSUTCB (Canessa 2006b: 250), for being a weak revolutionary who is not

making a concerted effort to disengage Bolivia from global capitalism.

Mallku Sabino's view that people in Kirkiyawí are not preparing or prepared to 'de-colonise' Bolivia is well-founded. As illustrated by the cool reception to his speech, villagers/locals are fairly uninterested in the visions of the future held by *ayllu* ideologues.

While *ayllu* leaders such as *Mallku* Sabino note the inadequacies of the union and the MAS government, union activists and employees of the *alcaldía* are exasperated by the demands and visions of the *ayllu*, seeing them as backwards, reactionary and unrealistic. The unions reprove the *ayllu* movement for its conservative impulses and tendency to compromise and negotiate with even the most reactionary governments (Van Cott 2003, Lucero 2006). As noted in Chapter 2, in the decades after the Bolivian revolution of 1952, the rural population, in exchange for their new suffrage and protection of their land, voted conservatively - backing the MNR and later military governments (Van Cott 2003). During the widespread demonstrations of 2000 the CSUTCB, headed by *Mallku* Felipe Quispe, protested loudly against the incumbent president and ex-dictator, Hugo Banzer. Instead of joining the ranks of protest against the neo-liberal reforms of the time, CONAMAQ displayed public loyalty to the president and announced that the *ayllus*, unlike the unions, were not 'protesters' (Lucero 2006). This proved an unwise move of CONAMAQ as the popularity of CSUTCB grew and the regimes of Banzer, and later Sanchez de Lozada, lost credibility. In the final uprising against Sanchez de Lozada in 2003, CONAMAQ joined the protests alongside the CSUTCB, but their reactionary tendencies remain a threat in the eyes of CSUTCB (Lucero 2006). Andolina (2003) argues that the *ayllu* movement is in part a product of transnational relations through legitimisation and funding, and Lucero (2006) suggests that the *ayllu* movement was offered this international support on the basis that it was viewed as politically less threatening than the unions.

The relationship between the two organisations has, as mentioned, been

described as a war and I did indeed hear rumours and stories of extreme scenarios where leaders or even village members of either organisation have been socially excluded and even brutally beaten due to their affiliation. Schilling-Vacaflor (2008) suggests that conflicts are frequent in some highland areas and points to the case of Qhara Qhara Suyu, an *ayllu* organisation which reported its local municipality to the Bolivian Ombudsman and the UN for human rights violations against its members (Schilling-Vacaflor 2008:3). The reaching out to the UN by Qhara Qhara Suyu exemplifies the international network within which *ayllu* movements imagine themselves and actually reside.

As well as the imagined and real presence of this international network, the presence of NGOs and their sometime differential treatment of *ayllu* and union members have arguably intensified divisions in some areas. During the 1980s some, often left-leaning, national NGOs saw the union as the only organisational form suitable for development (Lucero 2006: 44). Both Rivera Cusicanqui (1992) and Andolina (2003) have demonstrated how this left communities which had opted for *ayllu* structures in a bad position. Then, in the 1990s, international funders did the opposite, choosing to work exclusively with *ayllu* representatives. Most notable was the European Union's funding of the Campesino Self-Development Program.

Further demonstrating how membership in either organisation could be disadvantageous because of the whims of international funders, engineer Wilford from INDICEP told me of a previous project promoting health programs in rural schools in a nearby municipality where some children had been denied access because of their parents' membership in the *ayllu* – this despite the fact that Wilford had explicitly stated that the project ought to involve the whole village. Demonstrating the opposite, but again because of unpredictable 'development fashions', Wilford told me that he had heard a rumour of a Canadian NGO which had recently arrived in Northern Potosí with the aim of working on the *saneamiento* (retitling) of land, but which only wished to do so in cooperation with the *ayllu*, thereby excluding the

union.⁹⁰ In Wilford's view, this unnecessarily exaggerated an already existing divide. In some places, he explained, the *ayllu* and the union are very different organisations, and even though they both exist within the same village people are members of either one or the other, rather than both. The reaction to the Canadian NGO's demand to work with only the *ayllu*, Wilford continued, meant a wholesale shift in instrumental allegiance, as people pledged their loyalty to the organisation whose membership was more likely to improve their situation. This illustrates a strategic element in the relationship people have with organisations - going where the resources are.

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Taken together, the picture emerging from the voice of *Mallku* Sabino Veizaga and the stories of this NGO engineer, is one of an existing and possibly widening divide between the *ayllu* and the *union*. But in Kirkiyawí there was no evidence of a divide or an intense struggle to overcome differences. The presence of all three in combination - the *alcaldía*, union and *ayllu* - is evident. Although the *ayllu* and union constitute two discrete organisations with divergent ideologies and visions of the future, the distinctions between the two are not so obvious at village level. Unlike the description of divided villages which Wilford gives above, everyone in P'íya Qayma is a member of the *ayllu*. Membership is automatic, grounded in kin and land, not politics. Everyone is likewise a member of the union. Lucero (2006) has similarly noted that, in the highland villages, membership of indigenous federations is often collective, including the whole village rather than selected individual members.⁹²

Llank'ay, and the conflation of the ayllu and the union

Don Tiburcio and I were walking to Vila Pampa secondary school where the

⁹⁰ Saneamiento is the process of retitling land, securing collective ownership of land by the indigenous communities.

⁹¹ However, in this case there is too little information on the nature of the swap to endeavor any deeper analysis. We do not, for instance, know if people swapped back once the NGO had left and their move had always been intended as a temporary one.

⁹² In the area, the larger village of Bolívar is an exception to this generalised tendency. Here a different demographic make-up gives rise to diverging loyalties: a situation closer to what Wilford was describing, but for different reasons.

municipal engineers were meeting with village representatives to discuss the future of the man-made lake which stretches out below P'iya Qayma. At the time Don Tiburcio was acting *jilanko*. As this was not an *ayllu* meeting it was not obvious that it was his responsibility to go to the meeting. He explained to me that he and Don Valentín, the acting *dirigente*, had discussed the matter and as Don Valentín had attended an NGO meeting a few weeks earlier, it was now Don Tiburcio's turn. As we walked he complained - '*Como este jilanko, ashkata llankasani*' (as a *jilanko* I am working very hard). Noticing that he had used the verb *llank'ay* for work, I asked what kind of work the *jilanko* does, taking care to use the Spanish, *trabajo*, for work. He turned to me and said '*El trabajo del jilanko es llank'ay - igualito a manejar toros*' (The work of the *jilanko* is *llank'ay*, it is the same as ploughing a field with bulls). We arrived at Vila Pampa a good hour after the proposed starting time but the municipal engineers were still not there and half the village representatives were yet to come. The assembled company - Don Tiburcio, a few of the men and women already present, and I - lay down on the dry grass by the school and chewed some coca while we waited. Another 40 minutes passed until the red motorcycles of the engineers could be seen in the thin pass between two hills, big sand clouds surrounding the small, fast-moving figures.

The lake at the foot of P'iya Qayma, initially built for trout farming, had been created many years before. The farming project had never come to fruition. The municipal office had now decided that it was time to make use of the lake. The lake had originally been assigned to Vila Victoria, the next village along from P'iya Qayma. Limited fishing rights had been awarded to P'iya Qayma along with about six other neighbouring villages. As the trout farm never materialized, any dispute over who might use the lake had dissipated. But with the municipality showing renewed interest in the project the question of assignment and usufruct had quickly resurfaced in villagers' minds and dominated the meeting. The municipal engineers informed all present that, as long as the villages in the area were in support of the project, the municipality was going to turn the lake into a successful trout farm within the next year. As it happened, the previous Sunday there had been a meeting

after church in P'iya Qayma discussing the issue of the lake and the upcoming meeting with the municipal engineers. It had then been decided that what the village would really benefit from was a new lake of its very own. An area on the other side of the dirt road, before the hill where the cemetery stands, in one of the communal herding fields, had been agreed upon as the ideal site.

So as the arguments ensued at the municipal meeting regarding the future usufruct rights of the present lake, Don Tiburcio raised the point that his village wanted a second lake of its own. Discussions continued for some time and after the meetings one of the engineers told Don Tiburcio that he would be visiting P'iya Qayma in a few weeks' time to assess the possibility of a lake there. I have to admit that I was somewhat astonished that the municipality were considering what I had interpreted as a rather audacious request. On the way home Don Tiburcio explained to me that P'iya Qayma was one of the villages in Bolívar which the municipality had earmarked as a future touristic site. With the lack of transport, electricity, warm water and adapted lodgings it seemed to me that attracting tourists there would be incredibly difficult. But Don Tiburcio was correct - in the PDM for Bolívar 2007-2011, P'iya Qayma, along with Condorwacha, with its stable population of condors, and Loko Loko with its location close to an Inka Ruin, Inka Pucara, had been highlighted as a possible village for the development of 'eco-tourism'. P'iya Qayma had been picked due to its hot spring and dramatic setting. Don Tiburcio continued that he knew the municipality were keen to boost P'iya Qayma's potential as a tourist destination and for this reason might build the village a new lake as it would add to its attractiveness and potential activities for visitors.

Indeed, a few weeks later one of the municipal engineers drove into the village in a big car, accompanied by experts to survey the locality and assess its suitability for a new lake. Soon after this the villagers began to clear the area of stones and grass clumps in preparation for a second survey. One morning when Don Tiburcio stopped by my house for a cup of tea and some coca, I nodded in the direction of the proposed site. Having been cleared it

was now different in colour and texture from the surrounding area and already undergoing transformation: 'You might have a lake here soon,' I said. 'Si'p's,' (yep) Don Tiburcio responded and smiled '*Este reunionpi, bien fuerte llankarqani*' (I worked hard at that meeting).⁹³

In this situation Don Tiburcio describes his work in the position of *jilanko* as *llank'ay*. His efforts in attending the meeting, his knowledge of the municipal vision of P'iya Qayma as a site for eco-tourism, and his negotiation skills directly resulted in the land around P'iya Qayma being transformed and, with the possible introduction of trout, becoming an added resource which would ease and benefit life in the *ayllu*. This perception of the value of the work a *jilanko* undertakes as *llank'ay* extended similarly, and based on the same logic, to encompass the work undertaken by *dirigentes* and other local leaders.

The lack of distinction made between the efforts of a *jilanko* or *dirigente* in terms of its value as *llank'ay*, as will be evidenced below, is indicative of how the concept of *llank'ay* is not defined by reference to its connection to *ayllu* structures but rather based on the ability to transform land, to make it productive.

After months of observing meetings and many discussions with the incumbents of the various authority roles and other village members it became clear to me that the roles pertaining to the union and the *ayllu* were being used interchangeably. Though they reported to different authorities their responsibilities were very similar. These comprised convening meetings and passing on information between the *alcaldía* or NGOs and the other villagers, organising collective labour to realise projects sponsored by either of these groups, and organising work groups to deal with village projects, such as repairing the road and settling disputes. Another task was to keep safe the official seals of the village and stamp important documents. The *jilanko* was custodian of the village *ayllu* stamp and the *dirigente* of a village

⁹³ *Si'p's* and *No'p's* (Nope) are contractions of *si* and *no pues*. *Pues* translates as 'well'. The 'slang' is mainly employed by Quechua and Aymara speakers but sometimes also by Spanish speaking middle classes.

union stamp, either stamp could be used to authorise most official documents. Given that neither the union nor the *ayllu* sponsor building or infrastructural projects in the area, most of the work of the *dirigente* and *jilanko* pertains not to their specific organisations but rather to the general upkeep of the village, usually in cooperation with the municipality or NGOs.

Not only do the jobs of the *jilanko* and the *dirigente* appear very similar, but many people in P'iya Qayma conflate the two, making no clear distinction between them. The relationship between the *ayllu* and the union, then, was far from a hostile one, rather the separation between the two had been blurred to the point of near non-existence. Both organisations are envisaged jointly, in terms of what they provide for villagers today and in the future and their ability to do *llank'ay*, to transform the land.

In everyday *ayllu* life, people's relationships to all the surrounding institutions and their understanding of what the ideological and political arms of these organisations espoused was characterised by both gaps and conflation. The conflation of the different organisations is a result of several factors. The main one is the fact that they are essentially seen to be doing the same thing. Another very visible reason is the overlap created by limited numbers in the population. The high rates of out-migration in the area have resulted in a decrease of eligible men to fill all the posts of the various organisations without any overlap. The situation today is such that most men will hold the post of *dirigente* and *jilanko* at some point in their lives. Some are later nominated to be *kuraj tatas* and many men and women also take on responsibilities in other organisations, such as the municipal *junta escolar*, and/or become appointed 'leaders' by one of the NGOs present in the area. Even the *cacique* himself, Vincente Mamani, holds the prominent position of *Secretario de Relaciones* in the local union structure. It is not difficult to imagine that such overlap might blur the boundaries between the organisations. But as mentioned, the most salient reason for the occurring conflation of these posts and organisations are that they are in effect seen to be doing the same job - *llank'ay*.

The *ayllu* meetings and the union meetings were very similar in shape and protocol and would often be made up of representatives from both organisations, along with other individuals, as described previously in this chapter in the account of the *ayllu* meeting. Just as in the *ayllu* meeting, the little pyramid of the *tata santísimo* staffs was often made at union meetings when there were more than two *Kuraj tatas* present.

Descriptions and explanations of what the jobs of *dirigente* and *jilanko* constituted varied between informants. An engineer who worked for the *alcaldía* office likened the role of *dirigente* to that of a president of a nation and the *jilanko* to that of a captain on a boat. When I asked him to explain what he meant by this analogy, he told me that both are important but neither is the boss of the other. This was a point emphasised by many. Although some believed the union to be the stronger institution, within any one village the *dirigente* and *jilanko* were on equal footing.

Around Easter Doña Nieves told me that members of the *alcaldía* - the *jilankos* and *kuraj tatas* - were organising a party in the neighbouring Catholic village of Coyuma. I was confused and thought I must have misheard her as I knew that the *jilankos* and *kuraj tatas* are terms defining authority roles in the *ayllu*, rather than in the *alcaldía*. A few days later, my elderly neighbour, Doña Paulina, told me that 'the *ayllu* is an organisation made up of *jilankos* and *dirigentes*.' Many more conversations with several different people confirmed that this - what I initially took to be 'confusion' - was widespread. During my time in P'iya Qayma I regularly came across people using terms union, *ayllu* and *alcaldía* interchangeably. *Dirigentes*, for example, were often referred to as *ayllu* authorities, and the municipal *alcalde* as the head of the union.

Another set of reoccurring conversations on the topic of posts and organisations, concerned the structure and roles within the *ayllu*, each one yielding a different version. For instance, Don Juan Escalante, 50, a *kuraj tata*

himself and an elected member of the *concejal municipal*, claimed that *ayllu* Kirkiyawí no longer had a *cacique* but only a *mallku* and that this *mallku* lived in Wallata Waycha.⁹⁴ He said he could not remember the name of the *mallku*, how long he had been in the post or who had been the *mallku* before him. Francisco, nicknamed Pancho by his friends, a native to the village of Bolívar, and Ernesto, nicknamed Toro, originally from Cochabamba, are two engineers, the former works for the *alcaldía* and the latter for a Bolivian NGO. When I was travelling with them in a car one day they explained the *ayllu* authority system, as they understood it, to me. They told me that *ayllu* Kirkiyawí has four *caciques* and one *cacique* mayor, and that this *cacique* mayor had been in that role for at least the last 10 years. They believed that there was also a *mallku* who lives full time in Wallata Waycha, but who owns grand houses in both the towns of Oruro and Cochabamba, and they pondered the huge wealth that they imagined the *mallku* must have. Don Tomás, on the other hand, told me that *ayllu* Kirkiyawí does not have a *mallku* but only a *cacique* and that this post is hereditary, but he is not sure whether the present *cacique* is the son or the nephew of the previous *cacique*. He says that the *cacique* lives in Wallata Waycha, the permanent seat of the *cacique*, and that his name is Vincente Mamani. Don Tiburcio then insisted that the *cacique* is not a hereditary role. He was unable however to remember the name of the present *cacique*. He did agree that Wallata Waycha is the seat of the *cacique* and the arena for *ayllu* meetings where land disputes are discussed. Alberto, Don Tomás' 15-year-old nephew, explained to me that there is no *cacique* but only *mallkus* and *kuraj tatas*: he made no distinction between the two in terms of status or responsibility.

As the organisation of the *ayllu* and the naming of authorities does vary between *ayllus*, depending on whether they are Quechua- or Aymara-speaking, and on the extent of colonial, hacienda and Catholic influence, it was very difficult for me to verify any of the conflicting information that I was

⁹⁴ Part of the *alcaldía* office, the *concejal* is an elected committee that has limited political influence in the day to day running of the municipality but instead it oversees the *alcaldía*, in order to ensure that proper procedures are followed and corruption is not present, they have the power to depose an *alcalde* if they see fit.

gathering in Kirkiyawí. Towards the end of my stay in P'íya Qayma, in May 2009, I finally met both the *mallku*, Sabino Veizaga and the *cacique*, Vincente Arias. The *cacique* was indeed based in Wallata Waycha though he spent a lot of his time in Oruro. Through conversations with them both I finally reached a position of clarity regarding their respective roles and how they had attained them. As discussed previously, *Cacique* Vincente had inherited his position from his uncle and *Mallku* Sabino had been nominated for his role by the *kuraj tatas* of Kirkiyawí.

Confusing as the conflicting evidence I gathered was, I did glean some common themes. Almost everyone I spoke to told me that the main focus of the *ayllu* authorities was land disputes and that this was a key difference between the union and the *ayllu*.

Don Tomás told me a story about the fight for land. About 30 years ago P'íya Qayma fought a battle with Jachavillque, the nearby village in the neighbouring department of Potosí, and Doña Juana's home village. The fight was over the communal fields in which P'íya Qayma villagers were growing *cañawa* during the year of my stay there. On one of the days we spent harvesting in these fields, Don Tomás told me of the physical fighting that had gone on for weeks in these fields over the rights to the land. People died on both sides. Finally, the dispute was settled through dialogue and an agreement was drawn up and signed by the *jilanqos* of the respective villages. As we harvested and talked, a woman from Jachavillque was working on her field right next to P'íya Qayma's communal fields. Between these seemingly adjoining fields ran the border separating the communities and *ayllus*.⁹⁵

However, when an incident over disputed land occurred in P'íya Qayma during my stay - that of the *oca* theft described in Chapter 4 - it was the present *dirigente* rather than the *jilanqo* who mediated a solution. The case of the *oca* theft brings out interesting issues about the relationship between the

⁹⁵ Fernandez (2003) has noted the presence in Oruro and Potosí of violent inter-*ayllu* fighting, sometimes leading to fatalities, as recently as in the 1990s.

jilanqo and *dirigente*. On that Sunday outside the church the discussion was heated and the matter needed to be resolved. As the question was one of land I assumed that it would be the role of the *jilanqo* to step in and settle the dispute. However, it was not the *jilanqo*, but the *dirigente*, Don Benito, who arbitrated the matter. Nobody appeared surprised when Don Benito stepped up and took control. Don Calixto, who was the *jilanqo* at the time, was not present at the meeting at the church but his house was less than 5 minutes away and as it was Sunday he would most likely be working close to it - he could easily have been summoned to deal with the situation. Despite an agreed-on ideal, where the *jilanqo* and the *ayllu* deal with land disputes, in the event it was the *dirigente* who rose to the occasion. So while it is true that people still associate land issues with the *ayllu*, in practice this ideal is not necessarily adhered to. On this occasion the *dirigente*, Don Benito, elected himself to deal with the matter, and nobody objected. It would have been a simple matter to have the *jilanqo*, Don Calixto, attend the meeting but it was even simpler to use the already present Don Benito. Other factors, such as personal competence, or even etiquette, might also have been a factor for why no one objected to Don Benito's self-appointment. However, in order for his involvement and decision to carry any weight he must have been seen to embody the authority to deal with land disputes. Interestingly, as the post-church gatherings often served as village meetings and as Don Benito was a particularly active member of the church during his time as *dirigente*, he was often nominated, or nominated himself, to deal with various issues that arguably pertained to the role of the *jilanqo*. So, circumstantial situations and personal disposition certainly affect the work that a *dirigente* or *jilanqo* undertakes.

As the work of all these organisations are accorded equal value and all are seen as promoting *ayllu* life, upholding distinctions between them is not important. Thus all the practical factors that are part of life, such as personal ties, availability and ability, are unhampered by the constraints of organisational alliances, and personal capacities and relationships matter as much, if not more, than official positions. Testaments from the employees of a

Bolivian NGO who do a lot of work in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí and the employees of the Bolívar *alcaldía* confirm this point. The employees have all worked in the area for a few years, some of them were themselves born and raised in Bolívar but a majority come from other rural communities, having then gone on to do a degree in engineering in either Oruro or La Paz. Although the first port of call for any new project is usually the *dirigente* or the *jilánqo* as they are the individuals of the year who have agreed to give their time and work to village projects, their choice between the two depends more on the level of trust and ease of interaction than on that of representation and organisational membership. Another factor that comes into play is availability, that is who happens to be grazing their animals or working in their fields closest to the village at that time. Indeed, if villagers have an especially good relationship with someone on a particular project and that individual is willing, they will declare him or a 'leader'. All projects in that village and on that theme will often from then on continue to be coordinated through that 'leader'. Julio, a young man working as an engineer and project co-ordinator with the municipality, says that he can work in cooperation with whomever he wants, and that the municipal office does not expect or prefer him to work with either the union or the *ayllu*. In summation, personal friendships, kinship and long-standing work relationships usually outweigh the official title of village representative.

A major reason for why the highlands are a site where relations between the *ayllu* and the union are conflated rather than conflicted is because the 'battleground' claim is itself an exaggeration. The conflicts that do arise between the organisations are, to a great extent, limited to the leaders and activists of both groups and have never resonated, or played out, on the village level. There is, then, a gap between local perceptions and the imaginations and motives of political leaders. Canessa (2006b) describes a similar divergence between the indigenous people of the village of Pocobaya and the vision of indigenous leaders. *Pocobayaños* do not, for example, speak of shared political identity with an Aymara nation, or even identify as Aymara, as their leaders state. They are simply *Pocobayaños*. Neither do they

experience a shared identity with urban migrants, although the latter self-identify as indigenous.

One day, as we were talking about land rights, Don Tomás illustrated the gap between the ideologues that spearhead the *ayllu* and union movements, such as *Mallku* Sabino, and people in the village. He proudly informed me that P'iya Qayma and the whole *ayllu* is now protected like a *cancha* (pen) and recently they have also been awarded rights to sub-soil resources (he was referring to the creation of the TCO and more recent conferment of the legal personality of *ayllu*). Don Tomás was pleased with this and thought that INRA had done a good job. Now, he told me, he is looking forward to receiving papers that will grant individual private land titles, and so enable him to sell a section of his land if he wants. He would like to use the money to buy a plot of land in Oruro or Cochabamba and move his family there part-time in order to safeguard his children's' education. He knows that selling his land is at present impossible as the whole *ayllu* owns the land together, but he is convinced that private land titles are in the pipe-line and that the *ayllu* leaders and the president are working to make this dream of his come true. This is completely antithetical to the goals of the *ayllu*, the union and MAS, the explicit project of which is to endorse the privilege and superiority of communal land titles and the power of these to protect indigenous culture and livelihoods. That Don Tomás, an exceptionally active member of his community with excellent Spanish and many urban connections, is so disconnected from the core ideology of the *ayllu* and union demonstrates the extent of this hiatus. His lack of engagement with CONAMAQ, the union and MAS ideology is part of a bigger separation between the goals of the politicized elite and those entailed in everyday *ayllu* life, which has run through several hundred years of Bolivian history.

Don Tomás expresses concern over the lack of information in P'iya Q'ayma. He says that it is difficult for him to know whether or not the country is changing under Evo. But, despite his self-expressed sense of alienation from national politics, he has consistently voted for Evo and will continue to do so;

and after Evo is gone he will continue voting for MAS. Before Evo ran for president he had never bothered voting as he says that all the previous presidents and presidential candidates were *extranjeros* (foreigners), whereas '*Evo campesino es, conoce como es la vida en el campo – es uno de nosotros – ya podemos estar orgullosos de ser campesinos*' (Evo is a *campesino*, he knows what life is like in the country, he is one of us, we can now be proud to be *campesinos*). Don Tomás' previous lack of interest illustrates the point made earlier: that the rural poor have tended to regard the government with a mixture of apathy and wariness.

Don Tomás openly admits that in the rural areas they have not always been politically active, and that when they have their previous allegiances were changeable. He explains that, as far as he knows, the union is not originally from there but rather was something the peasants joined when the miners asked for their help. Both the union and the *ayllu* have backed different parties at different times. He remembers when he was young and the *campesinos* were with MNR; but as the MNR did not fulfil its promises the village members shifted their allegiances – '*No puedes usar la misma jompa toda su vida, tambien tienes que cambiar partidos políticos algunas veces, así es*' (Just like you can't wear the same sweater all your life, you have to change political parties now and then), he shrugged, lit another cigarette, and plucked at his coca leaves.

The people of P'iya Qayma, along with most rural poor, have rarely been on the front line of political mobilisation, in fact they have often acted as a conservative force. National politics have until now not been thought of as a place for them. Don Tomás is disconnected from the politics and ideologies of organisations which claim to represent him and he openly admits that he is politically unaware. The process of conflation of the *ayllu* and the union should be viewed in light of this gap between the aims and views of, for instance, *Mallku* Sabino and Don Tomás. For Don Tomás the political and ideological differences between the *ayllu* and the union simply make no sense. Similarly, upholding distinctions between local authority posts whose

incumbents, in essence, perform the same work does not make sense to Doña Nieves, Doña Paulina or the many others who conflated the *ayllu* and union in daily conversation. Neither do strict distinctions mean much to the men who hold these posts. The incumbent, they claim, performs *llank'ay* which means that the men will be fulfilling their *cargos* and travelling along their *thaki*. Don Tiburcio's work as *jilanqo* brought resources from the municipal office which is transforming the land in P'iya Qayma. Don Benito, in his role as *dirigente*, mediated a land dispute which ensured the continued proper engagement with the land. What mattered in those moments was not which organisation they were officially affiliated with, but rather the productive outcome of their efforts in terms of *ayllu* life.

Conclusion

There are several explanations for why the union and the *ayllu* in Kirkiyawí sustain harmonious relations, rather than the embattled ones that are alleged to predominate. Primary among these is the fact that heated disagreements and ideology-packed rhetoric have mainly been the preserve of the leaders. At local level, then, the alleged acrimony of this relationship is exaggerated. Other factors include the reality of a small population that is unable numerically to sustain several different structures without a considerable degree of overlap, a longer-term history of disengagement from national politics, the fact that personal relationships matter more than public positions, and the strategic or instrumental choices being made. But, in addition, a key reason for why divisions between the organisations are not sustained is because a majority of people view the work of both the *jilanqo* and *dirigente* as being *llank'ay*. Their roles are not thought of in terms of their distinct organisational origins but rather in terms of the unifying result of their work, their performances. As both the *jilanqo* and *dirigente* assist in making life in the *ayllu* possible and improving on it, they are seen as taking part in transforming the land and sustaining the relationship between people and the land.

This chapter has discussed the inter-institutional relationships of the *ayllu*,

union and, to some extent, the *alcaldía*. In Kirkiyawí, the *ayllu* is not a pristine and bounded organisation which fiercely protects its ideological boundaries, instead ideas, resources and people flow between the *ayllu* and the union to the point where the two organisations are conflated and often indistinguishable. Leaders of the two organisations counter-pose the union and the *ayllu*, viewing them as separate organisations that are turning the rural highlands into a battle ground, dividing communities and splitting the political left. There is evidence that this battle does occur in the Bolivian Andes, but there is not much talk in the academic literature or on the political arena of the situation that I found in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí: one of peaceful co-existence. This chapter contributes to the discussion on contemporary political events in Bolivia, advancing a local perspective which has previously tended to be overlooked. The relationship between central and local government and highland *ayllus*, such as Kirkiyawí, has through much of history been characterised by suspicion and disinterest. Alongside these emotions also exists a new sense of connection with and national belonging to the Evo Morales government. But, while people like Don Tomás are committed to supporting Evo Morales and now dreams of urban inclusion for his children, he does so without getting involved in the specificities, or ideological clashes, entailed in indigenous or union politics.

In analysing the role of *llank'ay* in the conflation of the *ayllu* and union, the nature of *llank'ay* is further illuminated. In this chapter *llank'ay* can be defined by its outcome, rather than the actual activity. *Llank'ay* is revealed to be a more inclusive concept than previously described, encapsulating a range of non-agricultural activities, but what does remain as its main defining feature is its ability to transform *ayllu* land.

Chapter 7: *Q'ara* people and *q'ara* land – The risks of migration

About two hours' walk from P'iya Qayma lies the small village of Jalsuri. In *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, it is known as '*la comunidad fantasma*' (the ghost village). It stands completely empty; the last inhabitants left two summers ago for a new permanent home in Oruro. The village itself and the fields surrounding it are avoided by everyone in the area. It is situated on a path between two other villages and is a shortcut for a handful of villagers when travelling from the main road. But the path is never used and I had to walk the long way around several times when in the company of anyone heading for the cluster of villages beyond Jalsuri in order to avoid the ghost village. At first I could not quite understand why this place was so studiously avoided. The emptiness did create an eerie atmosphere but to me it was just a cluster of uninhabited houses, a not uncommon site in the *ayllu* where people need to build new adobe houses for themselves every few decades as the old ones become damaged by smoke and begin to leak. The anxiety people experienced when walking past Jalsuri only began to make sense to me when I found out that becoming *q'ara*, (peeled, bare) through the act of migration was not only a risk facing people who neglected their agricultural obligations, but that land left un-worked and untransformed was *also* labelled *q'ara*. For those left behind, the land of Jalsuri was now known as *q'ara* and its presence troubled them. The fact that separation of people from the land, the act of migration, renders both incomplete, lays bare the fundamental ties that exist between the two, thus illustrating how their interrelationship is crucial to the development and fulfilment of both. Through examining the risks and possible outcomes of migration, this chapter demonstrates that agricultural labour and all forms of *llank'ay* are instrumental to the relationship between people and land, and in turn that this relationship is crucial to the status of people's personhood and the 'state' of the land. *Llank'ay* is fundamental to the relational categories of *runa* and *q'ara* – it both enables flexibility in being

runa and ultimately sets the limits of *runa-hood*.

The body of literature concerned with migration and identity in Latin America tends to focus on new urban communities and the new identities that people are creating, rather than the old communities and identities from which they are moving away (e.g. Alderson-Smith 1984; Paerregaard 1997). As my fieldwork was conducted in an *ayllu*, my data is focused on the actions of migrants when present in the *ayllu* and on the perspectives on migrants of those who remain in the *ayllu*. My analysis therefore emphasises the act of leaving and the consequences of this act, both for the migrant, and for the people and land that is left behind. Crucially, and in agreement with Andrew Canessa (1998), I suggest that, in leaving the *ayllu* and suspending the practice of agricultural labour and other forms of *llank'ay*, people are at risk of losing their *runa-hood* (*jaqi* in that case of Canessa's Aymara-speaking informants) and thus becoming *q'ara* (peeled, bare and naked). As described in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4, *q'ara* is an Aymara and Quechua term employed by rural highlanders to refer to non-*ayllu* people and most pointedly, to white people. Meaning naked, bare and peeled, *q'ara* is mainly defined by what it is not – it is the lack of embodied *ayllu* sociality and ultimately the lack of humanity. It is also associated with characteristics normally held by urban 'white' people, such as western clothes. I add to Canessa's argument that migration creates *q'ara* people through the discontinuation of agricultural engagement, by claiming that migration also creates *q'ara* land. The term was employed on several occasions by P'iya Qayma inhabitants in reference to unused land, and it always bore negative acconotations. The presence of *q'ara* land is an important element of the effects of, and reactions to, migration – both by the migrants and by those who remain in the *ayllus*.

There is no explicit writing on *q'ara* land in the Andean anthropological literature, as there is on *q'ara* people. But some authors (e.g. Molinié Fioravanti 1982; Harris 1980; Isbell 1978; Platt 1986) have noted the distinction between 'wild' and domesticated land. 'Wild' in the cases described by these authors includes uncultivated land, as well as mountaintops and rough terrain which are not only uncultivated but also un-

cultivable. Within this body of work on 'wild' land, the analysis tends to focus on the un-cultivable land – such as the mountaintops – rather than the uncultivated lower lands. These un-cultivable places are also the areas connected most with supernatural forces such as *apus* and *achachilas*. The land that people in P'iya Qayma refer to as *q'ara* land is thus only similar to one sub-section of 'wild' land as described in this literature. The other subsection is almost the opposite. For, while un-cultivable 'wild' land is highly animate and able to bring death and destruction, *q'ara* land, land which is left un-worked, becomes inanimate – as it ceases to 'bear fruit' its agency declines. Whilst the agency of 'wild' *apus* who have the power and inclination to kill is also dependent on the more general continuation of *llank'ay*, as shown in Chapter 5, they are not faced with the same imminent risk of becoming *q'ara* as are cultivable fields. *Q'ara* land is land whose real potential to be agriculturally productive is not being fulfilled, whose purpose it is to be transformed through manual labour but which is left untransformed. In sum, included in the notion of 'wild' is land that, in P'iya Qayma, is understood as two different things: the un-cultivable mountains such as the *apus* and the cultivable but uncultivated lower lands – *q'ara* land.

Olivia Harris' chapter 'The Power of Signs: Gender, Culture and the Wild in the Bolivian Andes' (2000 [1980]) notes the parallels between un-socialised people and wild land. I draw this same parallel, although more explicitly so, by emphasising the existence of *q'ara* land and its connection to *q'ara* people – initially evidenced by the simple fact that the same word is used for both. Harris describes how infants who die before they are ritually named are identified with the 'wild', and instead of being given 'proper' funerals their bodies are abandoned in uninhabited spaces. She also points to sexual practices as an arena where wild nature and un-socialised human relationships are associated – unmarried people should have sex in 'wild' places, on the hillside, or by a stream, while married couples on the other hand ought to restrict their sexual activity to the domestic sphere (Harris 2000: 186). There is a clear coupling of non-socialised/non-ritualised behaviour and un-domesticated land in this context. The present chapter

refers to this coupling in its analysis of *q'ara* people and *q'ara* land, arguing that both people and land can be devoid of culture.

Molinié Fioravanti (1982:55-6) specifically equates the contrast between the domestic, lower level, settlements and the highland landscape with that between culture and nature. Harris (2000 [1980]), on the other hand, warns against any attempt at employing a simple nature/culture analogy to understand divisions: for example, those between supernatural forces and Christianity, or female and male, within the folk model of the Laymi. As she asserts, it is more complex than that. Indeed, it would also be simplistic to interpret the divide between agriculturally un-worked and agriculturally worked land – and *q'ara* and *runa* people – as analogous to a divide between nature and culture. However, with regards to *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, it is imperative to appreciate the general belief that things can be more or less cultured and that part of the task of humans is to create cultured land and people, primarily through work. I suggest that, instead of imagining people and land as imbued with inherent characteristics of nature and culture, both people and land are seen as proceeding from one position to the other: they can move from being entities that are less cultured, to those that are more cultured/socialised and fulfilled – and vice versa.

The centrality of notions of process and gradual transformation to Andean cosmology is acknowledged in the regional literature, but their application is generally limited to writings on personhood (e.g. Abercrombie 1998, Canessa 2006b, Weismantel 2001). As I argued in the Introduction, in work that approaches structures of complementarity as the more dominant way of interpreting Andean cosmology (Arnold 1988, 2006 with Yapita; Harris 1986, 2000; Platt 1986), transformation and process is often under-analysed. This chapter, in examining topics of transformation and its processes, develops the theme of this thesis overall. While Chapters 3, 4 and 5 described and analysed the various processes which mark the transformation into *runa* people and agentive land, this chapter analyses events and actions in life which can undo this transformation, returning people and land to their *q'ara*

state. Just as Chapters 3, 4 and 5 argued that *llank'ay* is key to the transformation of people and land, this chapter concludes that *llank'ay* is vital to the retention of *runa*-hood for the migrant and to the prevention of land becoming *q'ara*.

An investigation into the types of migration taking place in P'iya Qayma today, and of the roles of and attitudes to seasonal migrants, enables us to examine the relationship between people and land, and once again the role of *llank'ay* within this context. As in Chapter 6, *llank'ay* is here shown to be flexible and inclusive of non-agricultural activities – and ultimately predicated on the outcome of the work rather than the specific activity itself. It is only when the purpose of migration and working in the cities ceases to be orientated around supporting survival in the *ayllu* that the person in question is no longer considered to be doing *llank'ay* – no longer transforming the earth. Somebody who no longer performs *llank'ay* places his/her own *runa*-hood, along with the 'culture' of the land, at risk.

However, while the notion of *llank'ay* creates an alluringly neat theoretical divide between *runa* and *q'ara* – with the person who engages in *llank'ay* as *runa* and the one who ceases to perform *llank'ay* as *q'ara*, along with all the non-*ayllu* people of the world – the reality is more complex. Just as shouldering an authority role is equated with ploughing the land – in other words, it is *llank'ay* – so working on an urban construction site in order to buy new hacks and picks for the *ayllu* also contributes to making life in the *ayllu* possible and can therefore be thought of as *llank'ay*. There is no clear cut-off point where a migrant is no longer engaging with the land; his/her work in the city could simultaneously be, and usually is, both *llank'ay* and concerned with living an urban life with new pleasures, needs and aspirations. The fact that activities other than agricultural labour can also be considered *llank'ay* allows for some work outside the *ayllu* to be undertaken without threatening the integrity of one's *runa*-hood or turning the land *q'ara*. While in real life there are, then, no clear cut-off points, the concept of *llank'ay* does create a structure of possibility and limits with regard to *runa*-hood.

The following sections of this chapter discuss first historical, and then contemporary, migratory trends in Kirkiyawí. These trends – the various factors that pull, push and root people – will reveal how political policy, socio-economic factors and also imaginations of the future, within the context of Evo Morales' presidency, at once entice people to leave and encourage them to remain in the *ayllu*. A majority of people in P'íya Qayma and the nearby villages choose to engage in seasonal migration, since this has proved the most practical and advantageous to them. The huge advantage of seasonal migration is the ability to retain links with the land and so remain *runa* and protect the integrity of the land. Seasonal migrants are able to remain invested and continue to invest in their home *ayllus* and as such are seen to be doing *llank'ay*. The second half of the chapter is divided into two sections – *q'ara* people and *q'ara* land – through the analysis of two families' experiences of migration: Don Basilio and his four children and Doña Juana with her elderly parents and teenage son. The fears and realities of the consequences of migration, in terms of personhood and land, are explored. This final chapter contributes to my overall argument regarding the crucial place of *llank'ay* to the relationship between people and land.

History of movement

As described in Chapter 2, movement and migration has characterised the Andean highlands throughout the last 600 years. Although an engagement with capitalism began only in the colonial era, the rural population of the Bolivian highlands has engaged in both internal and external systems of exchange since the time of the Inka empire (Bouysse-Cassagne, Harris and Platt 2004). As will briefly be discussed below, engagement with external economies, be they capitalist or not, is not in itself a threat to *runa*-hood. There is no sense that straying outside the ethnic economy automatically pollutes *runa*-hood or creates *q'ara* people.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ See pp142-144 for a discussion of this concept.

While the vertical or ethnic economy (Harris 1995a, 2000) in Kirkiyawí presently appears inactive with regard to foodstuffs; the need to travel and exchange goods in order to accumulate the resources for survival in the Andean highlands remains. Engagement in external markets has now expanded to become the main mode of exchange, but it has been an aspect of economic life for *ayllu* members since the start of the colonial period (Assadourian 1979; Rivera Cusicanqui 1978; Choque 1978; Murra 1978).

When the Spanish arrived with the intention of extracting wealth and created an exchange system using money which was oriented around a few single market places at the great mines and the city of Potosí (Murra, Wachtel and Revel 1986), the *ayllus* were suddenly confronted with capitalism. Markets and money had not been a feature of the Inka empire (Murra 1978). Although it is tempting to create a nostalgic narrative describing the shock of ‘modern’ capitalism as the destruction of a moral exchange order, the capitalist encounter as theorised by Michael Taussig (1980) in *The devil and commodity fetishism in South America* has long been criticised for ignoring the centuries of engagement Andean peasants have had in external markets and involvement in wage labour, and for homogenising the multitude of relationships that the indigenous people of the Andes have forged with capitalism. While capitalism brought its set of problems, which continued long after its arrival (Sanchez 1982), the pre-capitalist exchange system was not characterised by strong egalitarian principles but, as discussed in the Introduction, infused with hierarchy and power. Contrary to Taussig’s account, Harris has argued that accumulation and profit are not necessarily viewed as immoral within the ethnic economy, rather they can be associated with productivity and fertility, echoing the transformation of land into food (Harris 2000, 1995a). David Nugent contends that the trope of ‘resistance to the market’ has contributed to the reproduction of the familiar dualisms of modern/traditional, present/past and subject/object in the Andean literature (Nugent 1996: 258). As Nugent shows in his ethnography in Chachapoya, attitudes to markets and accumulation held by local indigenous people might vary through time depending on how they are experiencing capitalism in

general. While people in Chachapoya were deeply suspicious of the local merchants' ability to accumulate, generating explanations of this involving devil pacts and evil which are similar to what Taussig describes, a few decades earlier, they had in fact held the exact opposite view, seeing commerce, individualisation and accumulation as something positive. Andean peasants do not have inherent loyalty to use-value as opposed to exchange value. Harris also adds that 'the Laymi are not dependent on the market to the point where such dependence classically transforms the conditions of production' (Harris 2000:137). Though a majority of households in P'iya Qayma are subsistence households and indeed their conditions of production have not been transformed to any great extent, they are entrenched in the market as temporary wage labourers and as such part of capitalist relationships of exploitation (Canessa 2005; de Janvry 1981; Sanchez 1982).

While engagement in the urban markets often position rural migrants in relationships of exploitation, the markets themselves are not necessarily understood by *ayllu* people as inherently immoral and they do not automatically transform *runakuna* to *q'aras*. Instead, as the remainder of this chapter will argue, it is the continued engagement in efforts to transform the land, doing *llank'ay*, which shapes the fate of a person's *runa*-hood.

The interplay between ethnic economies and capitalist markets continues today. While the amount of goods which people are able to transact through engagement with outside markets far outweighs that circulating in the ethnic economy in Kirkiyawí today, the ethnic economy remains an important arena for the exchange of labour. As shown in Chapter 3, the internal exchange of labour (*aynuqa*, *ayni* and *chuqhu* and *mink'a*) is very active within the *ayllu*, particularly between close neighbours and kin and/or neighbouring villages. Indeed, with the increase of seasonal migration, the ability to draw on labour exchange has become critical to migrants' success in completing agricultural tasks on time.

Leaving or staying behind: trends and motivations in seasonal or long-term migration

When I first moved to P'iya Qayma, it felt as if I had arrived at a place of utter isolation. With its looming dry hills and handful of small mud houses, the stony dirt track that dwindles into the distance, the cloudless big daytime sky and the dark, starry night sky, men ploughing their fields with their two bulls and women herding their llamas and sheep, it radiated a sense of timeless calm, disconnected from the surrounding world. P'iya Qayma is unquestionably isolated in many ways, mainly due to lack of good roads and transport which makes any travel to the not too distant cities of Oruro or Cochabamba challenging. It lacks electricity and thus television and internet. There is no postal service or phone. But I soon realised that, despite appearances, P'iya Qayma is neither stagnant nor cut off – rather it is a place from which people are constantly travelling and to which they are constantly returning. People are on intimate terms with the terrain, with the vast surrounding areas and the scattered villages where they have sisters, brothers, cousins, parents and children. They cover great distances on foot, know what the valley behind the mountain feels like under their soles and speak the Aymara language of the next province along. As they engage in trade or wage labour to survive and provide better futures for their children, they go to Oruro, Cochabamba, Buenos Aires and Spain. And some of them return. The twice-weekly truck is always full of people. They come back with mobile phones, new haircuts and political news.

While movement and migration has marked the history of the wider highland area, ethnographic studies from the last two decades offer anecdotal evidence that out-migration from the rural highlands stands at an unprecedented high since the revolution of 1952. They also show that inhabitants are voicing their concerns about the effective disappearance of their communities. McNeish (2001), for instance, records extensive out-migration from the *ayllu* Killakas and a growing concern among the older generation that a way of 'living and working together' might be lost. Similar sentiments were often voiced by people in Kirkiyawí, again specifically by the older generation who were concerned that the villages would soon be

populated only by the elderly and infirm. However, the statistics from Bolívar municipality, though recording fairly high levels of out-migration, suggest that population numbers are not plummeting to the extent that the villagers fear, as it is seasonal rather than permanent migration that has proved the most popular. As this chapter will go on to describe, the net outcome of all the pushing, pulling and rooting forces, in combination, is seasonal migration in most cases.

Most households in P'iya Qayma, as with the rest of the villages of the *zona alta* of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, have at least one family member who engages in migration, whether seasonal, temporary or permanent. The most common period for seasonal migration are the rainy summer months when there is not much agricultural work to be done. It is usually the husband and the teenage children of a family who journey to town in search of work, while the women, elderly and younger children remain in the village with the animals. Between 2002 and 2007, just under 20% of the total population in Bolívar engaged in some form of migration (PDM Bolívar 2007); this is more than two thirds of the adult male population. Almost 70% of this migration was temporary or seasonal (PDM Bolívar 2007). These figures are only rough estimates, as there is no way of knowing for certain whether a migrant currently living away from his/her rural area will return or not. A majority of the seasonal migrants in Kirkiyawí go to the big cities of Bolivia or the coca-growing region of Chapare. For P'iya Qayma, and the other villages in the *zona alta* of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, the large city of Oruro is the most common destination. Some of these families own their own base, a small house or room, in one of Oruro's migrant suburbs, but most lodge with members of the extended family or draw upon their *compadrazgo* networks for board. A significant minority of temporary migrants travel further: to Buenos Aires, the United States or even to Spain in search of work which will allow them to send life-changing amounts of money back home. These international migrations often fail to go according to plan and I lost count of the number of heart-rending stories I was told about husbands, sons and mothers whose much longed-for return never happened. One man from the village of Bolívar

had been waiting for eight years for his fiancée to return from the United States. He had not heard from her at all in the last seven years but remained steadfast in the belief that she would come home to him one day.

Don Severino and Don Tiburcio, Don Basilio's two eldest sons, whose experiences of migration will be explored at depth later in the chapter, both started travelling to Oruro over fifteen years ago. As seasonal migrants, they would leave for the city in the rainy seasons in order to engage in cash labour. Don Tiburcio told me that money – literally, *pesos* – was the main reason for his own and his brother's initial seasonal migration. Money is by far the most common answer to the questions: 'Why have you moved to the city?' or 'Why do you want to move to the city?' In the rural areas there is very little money in circulation; the phrase often used is '*aquí no corren pesos*' (there is no money running around here). Although people are engaged in subsistence farming, and thus produce their own food and many other necessities, there are still many things that can usually only be bought with cash,⁹⁷ for example: schoolbooks, batteries, candles, farming equipment, cooking equipment, dyes, vaccinations for the animals, transport into town, gas, coca, alcohol, rice, oil, soap, detergent, clothes, animals, bicycles, and more.⁹⁸ The increasing need for cash to buy commodities of this kind was the initial impetus for Don Tiburcio to engage in seasonal migration; he used the money earned to assist with life in P'iya Qayma. His brother, Don Severino, on the other hand, invested his money in buying cars and eventually established his own car rental business in Oruro.

While cash for commodities is usually the primary motivating factor given both for those who migrate seasonally and those who move permanently, two other main reasons given for permanent migration are education and

⁹⁷ Bartering does happen now and then in most market places, but the majority of commodities are exchanged through the medium of cash.

⁹⁸ Much of the farming equipment is made by hand but some parts have to be purchased and even those parts made by hand may need to have the wood for them purchased in town as no trees grow in the *zona alta*. Much of the cooking equipment is also made by hand but some pots and pans are usually purchased from the town markets. Although many of the dyes used are natural, chemical dyes are fashionable and most women will buy them to use in their weaves.

healthcare. Sian Lazar's (2008) migrant informants in El Alto listed these same factors, among others, as the main reasons for their own migration.

Don Tiburcio often bemoaned the fact that his brother Severino's children, who were all attending primary and secondary schools in Oruro, were getting a superior education to that of his own children. There appears to be a widespread belief that schools in town are superior to those in the rural areas.⁹⁹ I have little insight into urban schools and have no means to compare the two. What matters is that people perceive that their children are receiving an inferior education in rural areas and therefore feel the need to send their children to urban centres for their education. The risk, as Angelica, the teacher at the P'iya Qayma primary school, explained to me, is that this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: as the rural schools lose pupils they are threatened with closure, resulting in a decrease in available education in rural areas. The primary school in P'iya Qayma is regularly at risk of being closed down by the municipality due to low attendance rates. Its closure would force the younger children to travel 40 minutes on foot every morning and afternoon to the neighbouring village of Vila Victoria for their primary school classes.

Healthcare is a further factor commonly given as a reason for moving to the city. Most people have lost family members over the years due to lack of medical assistance. The nearest clinic to P'iya Qayma is in Vila Pampa, two hours away by foot, and there is no transportation. But this distance is not the main problem, as it is relatively close and people are not shy of walking far greater distances for far less. More serious is that the Vila Pampa clinic is

⁹⁹ I do not know to what extent this is true but I do know that young teachers fresh out of teacher training college have to complete their 'rural service'. This 'service' entails taking up a post in a rural school for a couple of years. A majority of teachers would prefer to work in the towns as they feel lonely and isolated in some of the rural villages and have to travel significant distances if they want to see their families at weekends. Although they receive a rural weighting to their pay package in order to assist with travel, they would spend a great deal more than this on transport should they wish to return home at the weekends (interviews with several of the school teachers in the area). Once their 'rural service' has been completed they can apply for jobs in the towns. As a result, rural schools are often staffed by the younger and least experienced teachers who are still completing this 'service.'

very restricted in the care it can provide. The clinic staff administer some antibiotics, but the supply is limited. Their response to most ailments is a vitamin B complex injection and an anti-inflammatory injection. Although assistance during labour and ante- and post-natal care is offered by the clinic, few women make use of it and prefer giving birth in their own homes. There is a maternity care programme that includes free vaccinations, vitamins and baby powder milk, given to children up to the age of two, which has been popular. But the clinic is unable to cope with more complicated maternal or infant health problems. Only one doctor and one nurse work at the clinic and, although able to perform very minor surgery, they are not equipped to undertake bigger operations such as caesareans. So the clinic can offer very little to critically ill patients other than patching them up and attempting to stabilise them while waiting for transport. The second serious gap in care is that there are no ambulances or regular transport at Vila Pampa apart from the twice-weekly truck. In the bigger village of Bolívar there is an ambulance attached to the slightly larger Bolívar health clinic. There is a phone in the next village along from Vila Pampa, Molle Pongo, which works intermittently. However, there is only one key to the building that houses the phone, which is kept by the village *jilanqo*. For a patient to secure transport to a hospital in Oruro the *jilanqo* of Molle Pongo has to be located, the phone needs to be working and the ambulance in Bolívar available. Unsurprisingly, few people who fall ill in the *zona alta* of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí are hospitalised in Oruro.

Don Tomás told me of his own experience of inadequate healthcare. His first wife, Doña Maria Cruz from Vila Victoria, died in 1998 from complications arising from a stomach complaint. Don Tomás took her to the clinic in Vila Pampa when she was ill and wanted to take her on to the hospital in Oruro, but the doctor in Vila Pampa said there was nothing he could do for her and that she would never survive the journey to Oruro; she died only a few hours later. Luisa, Don Tomás' third daughter, died at the age of 14 in 2002, also suffering from stomach pains. Again, Tomás attempted to go to a hospital in Oruro with her but the doctor in Vila Pampa said that Luisa was getting better and would not need hospital treatment. The following day, her condition worsened and she died soon afterwards. Problems of health care

were more widely felt in the family. Luisa's grandmother (Don Tomás' first wife's mother), who had come to live in P'iya Qayma with her daughter and son-in-law, died in 2003, shortly after her granddaughter. Her illness was never diagnosed or treated. Don Tomás was not alone in having lost family members who might have been saved by appropriate medical treatment, and the inadequacies of the local healthcare provision were acutely felt by all in the area.

An issue which has been noted by several authors (e.g. Lazar 2008; Paerregaard, 1997) as a main motivating factor in rural to urban migration is the pressure on the land and the endless division of already limited family lands, resulting in fields far too small to sustain a family. This factor, however, was not something that was emphasised by people in P'iya Qayma. Perhaps the recent years of out-migration have reversed this trend. People explained to me that it was not the amount of land that was the main problem, but the inability, given the available labour and technology, and the climatic restrictions, to extract from the fields much more than what was needed for basic subsistence. Cash was a necessity in providing what was needed in the family home. In order to get cash, people needed to sell goods in the urban markets, and in order to have anything to sell they needed to create a surplus of agricultural produce. It was then also critical that they receive a fair price for their goods. So, while lack of available land is a significant problem in some areas, at this time it was not an issue in P'iya Qayma.

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Up to here, I have been considering those factors – often termed 'push' and 'pull' factors – which incline people towards moving to urban centres. There are, however, broader ideological and practical realities that have recently made both the town and countryside more attractive places to live which complicate any simple narrative of 'push' and 'pull.' With the election of Evo Morales, the realities of life in the country and life in the city have changed. The two arenas have also acquired new symbolic and ideological significance.

The city is being re-imagined as a place of inclusion, not just subordination and racism. 'New' urban areas mainly made up of migrant communities, such as El Alto, are growing. Also, the horizons of urban aspiration have shifted. Girls are no longer destined merely to be someone's maid and boys might one day become presidents. But this re-imagination of urban realities does not entail the denigration of rural ones. On the contrary: the romance of rural life and its traditions is being rejuvenated. Indigenous rights groups are promoting the notion of the morally superior *ayllu* and 'subsistence farming as the life of the 'real' indian, untouched by colonial forces' (interview with *Mallku* Sabino Veizaga, CONAMAQ). Evo Morales himself draws on Aymara symbolism and wears traditional clothing to show strength. The now politicised phrase '*vivir bien*' (or *suma qamaña* in Aymara and *sumaj kawsay* in Quechua), meaning 'living well' and 'good life', is presented by the government as grounded in indigenous cosmology and has become a vision of future development in several Andean countries. As such, it has been included in the recently re-drafted constitutions of both Bolivia and Ecuador (Gudynas 2011; Walsh 2010).¹⁰⁰ '*Vivir bien*' refers to a wholesome, well-rounded life. The political packaging and presentation of the phrase suggests that the indigenous people of Bolivia have a privileged understanding of what it means to live well – they are 'naturally' better at '*vivir bien*' (Gudynas 2011).

The notion of the good life in the rural area, and the healthy *ayllu* peasant, is regularly echoed by people in P'iya Qayma themselves. As often as Don Tomás imparted to me the stories of the hardships of life in P'iya Qayma, and the threat it posed to the bodily wellbeing of those he loves, he also praised the area's beauty, the cleanness of the air, the richness of its earth and its health benefits. In town, he told me, there is too much heat and a high prevalence of cancer. In the villages no one has cancer, he explained. One day he recounted an incident to me that illustrates his sense of the healthy and pure rural *ayllu* man and women. A few years earlier, when on a visit to

¹⁰⁰ In Ecuador the phrase used is '*buen vivir*.'

Cochabamba, he had been approached by a '*gringa*' (foreigner, usually white, often of North American descent). She had solicited him to impregnate her because, he divulged to me, she wanted a child with the pure and strong blood of an indian. Don Tomás, still somewhat bemused, and also amused, by her forwardness, had declined. Indeed, he told me that he thought she might have been crazy and would perhaps even murder him in her hotel room. What was interesting was Don Tomás' subsequent analysis of the '*gringa*'s' motivation:

The world is very polluted, your country is very polluted, the cities here in Bolivia are full of pollution and disease and it makes the body weak. The only places that are clean and 'good' are the rural villages. And we who live here, we breathe fresh air and work hard and so we are pure and strong. She wanted her baby to be strong like us.

In sum, Don Tomás felt, as do the recent and older migrants in El Alto described by Sian Lazar (2008), that the country is a 'good' place to live and that the Bolivian indian is not 'dirty,' as centuries of racism have claimed, but 'pure.' Doña Casimira, echoing the sentiments of Don Tomás, informed me that she prefers life in P'iya Qayma because it is clean, whereas Oruro smells and is polluted. She believes that life in the village is better, '*mas bonito*' (more beautiful) than, and morally superior to, urban life. Her Protestant conversion might have encouraged this sentiment: as we saw in Chapter 5, rural life is often portrayed by the Protestant churches as more Christian and less corrupt than life in the towns. Don Tomás advised me several times that there was no better or more beautiful life than life in the *ayllu*. This was one of the reasons he had not migrated. Other villagers concurred with his thoughts. Considering how basic and hard life is in P'iya Qayma, it is noteworthy that there is no sense that people are scrambling to get to the cities – there is a pride in *runa*-hood and in *ayllu* life, vindicated and encouraged by this re-validation of rural life promoted by both the government and the protestant churches as superior to, or better for the soul, than urban life.

At the same time, Evo Morales' government is putting more resources into rural areas, speeding up the provision of electricity and building more

schools and health posts. In fact, phase one of electricity installation in P'iya Qayma had begun by 2008. The tall wooden poles that will support the power cables were in place, a point of pride for the whole village. Although nobody knew exactly when phase two would begin, plans for the future constantly included the presence of electricity, and there was general agreement that the future would be better than the present, that changes, mainly in terms of infrastructure, were coming to the rural areas. One evening, when walking back to my house from Don Tomás and Doña Nieves, I lost my way in the dark. Had it not been for Don Tomás deciding to head out after me, rightly assuming that the weather conditions would impair my sense of direction, I do not know if I would have found my way through the night-time rain. Relieved to have found me and to be able to escort me safely home, he kept repeating, 'Next time you come and stay with us it will be better because there will be *luz* (literally light, but commonly used to refer to electricity in general) and you will be able to see, even at night.'

While socio-economic factors tend to encourage migration, there are several other factors that may induce people to stay in their villages. As described above, a renewed validation of the indian and rural life and the promise of improved infrastructure in the rural areas make them more attractive as homes. Below I will also discuss factors pertaining to land ownership, the presence of NGOs and the opportunities they provide for temporary employment, and new transport links, all of which encourage life in the *ayllu*.

As discussed in previous chapters, international and national politics of the 1990s redrew the landscape within which indigenous groups can act and be acted upon. The new land titles awarded by INRA through *saneamiento* binds people to the land in the sense that this land may not be sold. If someone migrates on a permanent basis they lose the income from the land without any recompense. On the other hand, as the land may not be sold but remains part of the *ayllu*, it remains in a stable relationship with its original owners, who could potentially re-claim it. It will therefore not simply be lost if not lived on for a few years. However, as described in Chapter 4, a lack of

sustained *llank'ay* can result in decreased rights to land in the eyes of fellow villagers. Knowledge of this creates security and space which enables people to engage in seasonal and temporary migration with the confidence that they will be able to return to their village and work their land again. By using *chuqhu* and *ayni* the migrant can often manage to sustain his lands without spending the majority of his time in the village. This, however, is effective only if a large proportion of the population remain permanently domiciled in the villages.

The growing presence of NGOs in the rural highlands throughout the 1990s, and the creation of local municipalities in the 1980s, which have recently seen a significant boost in their budgets, means that there has been an influx of spending power to the rural areas. Temporary employment can be found through these organisations, and the local population also acquire cash by selling produce to them directly. Don Elias, a young, single man from Molle Pongo, spent two years working in the mines. With the money he had saved up, he bought a mini-bus. The NGO Niña Indígena, a charity working to improve the lives of indigenous children, then engaged him and his bus to serve as the local school bus. Every day, he collects the children from the smaller villages and drives them to the secondary school which is located as many as four hours' walk away from some of the villages. Don Elias provided this service for the children in P'iya Qayma and the other villages along the road to the secondary school in Vila Pampa. He earned a good salary and although he spent at least three hours a day driving the school bus, he still had time to work his land. Opportunities such as this are not available in abundance but they do exist. A large number of people have, in these more recent times, at some point been paid for various services by an NGO or the municipality. For instance, a handful of women in a village might be asked to cater for a municipal or NGO meeting; they prepare potatoes and *chicharrón* (fried pork) or *fricassee* (pork stew) and are compensated in cash by the organisers.¹⁰¹ The overall increase in the rural areas of primary and

¹⁰¹ *Chicharrón* is a popular meat dish - the meat is first boiled and then fried in its own fat. Pork is traditionally the meat used but *chicharrón* can be prepared with any meat. When made in the Kirkiyawí llama or mutton is often used as a substitute for pork. *Fricassee* is

secondary schools since the educational reforms of the post-revolutionary period has over the last decades steadily increased the numbers of teachers (Canessa 2004). These teachers are key figures in the villages today. Like the NGO staff they bring transport, money and opportunities. Many teachers bring goods from the city and run little shops from their houses. They also stimulate economic exchange, using their salaries to buy eggs, potatoes and meat from the villagers. Some teachers have their own means of transport. For instance Don Marciano and his wife, Doña Emiliana, who both work as teachers in the area, have a small truck that can fit about twenty people in the back, and it doubles up as an informal bus service between the village and Oruro at weekends. The teachers also bring news and information from the cities and are often asked by village members to assist in their meetings with the municipality and NGOs.

This developing transport network, including the presence of teachers and NGOs who provide extra transport, is one of the major factors that affects the pattern of migration. Doña Casimira informed me that when she was young there was no *ruta* passing through P'iya Qayma and getting to Oruro was difficult. Instead, people would travel to the small mining town of Santa Fé in order to buy and sell goods. From Santa Fé it was possible to catch a second truck to Oruro. They walked to Santa Fé on foot with donkeys carrying their belongings, the journey often taking a full day. They were also limited in what they could bring back, as a donkey can carry only a relatively light load. These long trips made shorter visits and stints of work in Oruro logistically difficult and therefore less attractive. Today, by contrast, it is possible to go to Oruro in half a day and to transport several bags of potatoes as well as a few animals.

Alongside regular transport the growing communication network makes moving between town and *ayllu* easier. Some people in P'iya Qayma have bought mobile phones, which they use to contact family and friends in the

a popular spicy pork stew (again, meats other than pork can be used).

towns, enabling plans to be made or changed quickly. However, only a handful of places in P'iya Qayma have reception – the closest spot being the very top of Mt Wayna Tanka. As it takes a good couple of hours of climbing to reach the top, mobile phone calls are not made frequently. But there is the promise of possible future improvement of reception in the area as part of a wider set of projects, promises and hopes regarding infrastructural improvement in rural areas.

In sum, opportunities to earn money in the local area, greater availability of transportation and better channels of communication have recently contributed to making rural areas less isolated and easier places to live. Under the current dispensation the factors that influence people's decision to migrate simultaneously draw them to urban centres and dispose them to remain in their rural villages. So it is perhaps not surprising that the statistics show seasonal migration as the type most people engage in. However, as the remainder of this chapter will argue, in order to fully understand the character and effects of migration, the concepts of *runa*, *q'ara* and *llank'ay* also need to be taken into consideration.

Q'ara people

The themes of this section will be further illustrated through the experiences of two families. The first consists of the widower Don Basilio and his four children, all of who engage in some form of migration. The motivating factors for the initial seasonal migration undertaken by his two eldest sons, Don Severino and Don Tiburcio, have already been mentioned. The experiences of being left behind are explored through Don Basilio and his mainly *ayllu*-based son, Don Tiburcio. The life of his daughter, Doña Casimira, offers insight into the motivations for, and outcomes of, seasonal migration. The second family is that of Doña Juana and Don Valerio. In particular, I focus on the sense of responsibility toward the land of her migrant parents that Doña Juana feels and her concern for the *runa*-hood of her eldest son, who is performing military service. The stories of these families illustrate how

migration creates *q'ara* people and *q'ara* land. Such concepts help to explain the feelings people have towards the ghost village of Jalsuri and show how these relate to a cosmology of processually created people and land.

As people migrate and discontinue their practice as *runakuna* and their journey along the pathway of *thaki* (Abercrombie 1998), they risk becoming *q'ara*. As migrants start new lives in the cities, their daily activities, clothes, food and aspirations change. Despite this, several ethnographic studies highlight the continued strong bonds with their home *ayllu* that migrants experience: Sian Lazar (2008) writes that some people in El Alto, both recent migrants and children of older migrants, have stronger affiliations with their villages than their new urban home. Paerregaard (1997) found that the same sentiments were true for the migrants from Tapeño living in Lima, Peru: 'Identification with a place of origin, the sense of belonging, and the memories of life in their native village are the principle means by which Tapeños and other Andean migrants identify themselves' (1997: 11). Also, groups often organise their communities in the cities according to their *ayllu* origins (Altamirano 1984; Alderson-Smith 1984). The evidence of these studies – as with migrants elsewhere – suggests that migrants remain connected to and invested in *ayllu* life; possibly even in inverse proportion to the length of time they have spent away. But retaining ties with, and affection for, a home *ayllu* is not the same as remaining *runa*. *Runa*-hood in the *ayllu* is processual and based on practice, as Canessa (2012, 1998) demonstrates: though one may be born into an *originario* family, substance is not enough to ensure lifelong *jaq'i* or *runa* personhood. One must constantly pursue the path of *thaki*, continually filling life with appropriate practices such as agricultural labour, rituals and roles of responsibility.

Andrew Canessa (1998) and Krista Van Vleet (2011) are among the few writers who look at migration in Bolivia from the point of view of the village. As mentioned previously, Canessa argues that, in his fieldsite of Pocobaya, La Paz department, those who leave their lands and head for the cities risk losing their indian humanity – *jaq'i* (Aymara) or *runa* (Quechua) – and

becoming *q'aras*. Isbell (1978) and Harris (2007) have also noted the usage of the term *q'ara*, or *q'ala* in the case of Isbell's Peruvian informants, to refer to those who live outside the *ayllu*, who do not work the land or engage in communal labour. As described in Chapter 4, Canessa details the fate of two migrants, one of whom loses his *jaq'i*-hood, while the other retains his, and persuasively argues that continued engagement with land at key agricultural moments of the year is crucial to the retention of *jaq'i* identity. In a similar vein, I propose that agricultural labour is crucial to *runa* identity but I also suggest that the concept of *llank'ay* incorporates various non-agricultural activities that are likewise perceived to transform the land. All are valued as practices which constitute *runa*-hood. The following pages examine the transformation from *runa* to *q'ara* amongst migrants from P'iya Qayma and the reactions to this transformation by those who remain behind. Crucial to this transformation is the concept of *llank'ay*. As described in previous chapters, work on the land is the greatest of (Christian) blessings and indeed the purpose of life (Harris 2007). *Llank'ay* is therefore 'life-work' and thus the very essence of the process of creating personhood.

Early one morning I went to visit my next-door neighbour, Don Basilio. He is in his seventies and his wife, Doña Demecia, died many years ago. His adobe hut has a comfortably arranged interior and displays his aesthetic considerations. As you come in, the adobe oven and cooker is straight ahead and the fire in it is always smouldering. He owns a collection of well-maintained pots and pans, which are kept neatly stacked on a narrow shelf above the cooker when not in use. On the right runs a deep bench, covered in furs and colourful weaves and above it a small window fitted with glass. A little candle stands on the tiny window sill; at night you can see it flicker from far away. To the left of the door, opposite the bench, is Don Basilio's bed. Like all beds in the kitchen huts, it doubles as a seat during the day. Again, this is covered in furs and textiles. Next to the bed is a round stone table. Originally made to be a hand millstone, it is still occasionally used to grind *cañawa*. The stone table is covered in a little red tablecloth and on top of it sits Don Basilio's radio; when switched off it is carefully draped in a cotton doily. The

radio is the centrepiece of the room and Don Basilio spends many hours lying in his bed listening to it. This is how I found him that morning, stretched out on top of his furs listening to a music programme on one of the evangelical channels. But that morning he was in especially good spirits as his daughter, Doña Casimira, had arrived the day before from Oruro. Doña Casimira was preparing breakfast and Don Basilio, in a jubilant mood, told me that he was happy as his *wawa* (Q&A) (baby) was back and that it was good to have a woman in his house: '*waway está - mejor con warmi wasiypi.*' Doña Casimira shook her head, tutted and laughed at her father.¹⁰²

Doña Casimira, Don Basilio's only daughter, is in her late thirties and unmarried. She spends a little over half of her time in the city of Oruro, where she has mostly been employed in temporary childcare/nanny jobs, but she has also sold *chicharrón* or other 'fast foods' in markets or at the truck stop in Oruro. As a single woman she is not a typical seasonal migrant. She tells me that she is living a good life in both the *ayllu* and the city, and that the reason why a life like this is possible is because she has not married and because of the improvements in transportation. Doña Casimira moves between the two worlds, making use of the benefits of seasonal migration. She has had regular periods of working as a domestic servant or in the market in Oruro since her late teens. She tells me that what she would really like, however, is to find employment with the municipality in Oruro, cleaning and maintaining public parks and streets. Out on the city streets in the early mornings, one can see orange-clad street cleaners, mainly women, employed by the municipality. Bent double, they clean the pavement with a brush in each hand, moving up and down the streets with impressive speed. Municipal work is valued by both men and women: it is reasonably well paid and secure, with longer-term contracts, as opposed to a lot of the construction work that the men engage in, which only hires and pays by the day. Many of the migrants who chose to move to Oruro permanently do so after having secured a job with the municipality. However, a job with the municipality would make frequent

¹⁰²The term is used affectionately for a child of any age. *Waway* means 'my baby', the *y* ending indicating the possessive form.

trips back to P'iya Qayma more difficult, something Doña Casimira explicitly acknowledges as a disadvantage of what would otherwise be her dream job.

In town, Doña Casimira tells me, she always wears her *pollera* skirt. The *pollera* skirt denotes a *cholita* identity (Van Vleet 2005, Weismantel 2001), which in the rural areas is a sign of urban experience, connection and some wealth. A vast majority of women in P'iya Qayma always wear a *pollera* when going into Oruro, as they find this brings them greater acceptance and respect than they would get in their *almilla* (more traditional black embroidered) dresses. Unlike most women of her generation in P'iya Qayma, Doña Casimira often wears a *pollera* in P'iya Qayma as well. Some of the younger women do wear *pollera* skirts in P'iya Qayma occasionally. But on a daily basis most women of all ages wear the *almilla* dress. While the *pollera* is far less hard-wearing and less practical to use in the villages than the *almilla*, Doña Casimira still wears it regularly in P'iya Qayma, signalling her dual identity and her own pride in it. Dress in Bolivia is a marker of identity, class and ethnicity (Canessa 2012, Van Vleet 2005; Weismantel 2001). By wearing her *pollera*, rather than her *almilla*, in town, Casimira hugely increases her chances that the urban population will perceive her as a *cholita*, rather than an indian, and as such, she claims, she will be met with more respect and less suspicion. But whilst dress changes her persona dramatically when in Oruro, in P'iya Qayma people do not particularly point to her clothes as a marker of difference. Some of the women envy the soft folds of Casimira's *pollera* skirt but her wearing of a different outfit from theirs does not undermine her *runa*-hood. Though far from fluent, Doña Casimira speaks Spanish better than most other women in the village and several of the men. As described in the Introduction, language is another one of the imagined key markers of the fluid and relational categories of identity, class and ethnicity in Bolivia (Abercrombie 1991; Canessa 2012). Doña Casimira's language skills have assisted in the development of her friendship with the Oruro-based Baptist pastor who occasionally visits P'iya Qayma, have augmented her confidence in village meetings with the municipality or NGOs which are largely conducted in Spanish, and certainly helps her in her pursuit of money in the Oruro, but they have not threatened her *runa*-hood in the eyes of her

relatives and neighbours in P'iya Qayma.

Doña Casimira is an outgoing woman who appears happy and at peace with her situation. She can handle life in the town and yet is deeply attached to her life in P'iya Qayma. She confided in me many times that women who have husbands and children have a hard life, and that she consciously chose to avoid marriage after having seen her mother struggle for many years. Her mother, whose memory she reveres, bore 14 children of whom only four survived to adulthood, Doña Casimira being the only girl. Steering clear of marriage, and thus being childless, would not automatically clear the way to greater mobility, however, since women are in charge of animals. Doña Casimira has a large herd of sheep and llamas and so needs to arrange for their care while she is away. Although she shares a household, *cocina*, with her father, their animals are kept apart and they take individual responsibility for their own herds. Don Basilio rarely helps Doña Casimira with the herding of her animals when she is away working in Oruro. Instead, her elderly aunt Doña Simona, her mother's brother's wife, has been looking after her sheep and Doña Nieves, her father's sister's daughter, has been tending her llamas. (Unusually, Doña Casimira's mother, Demecia, was herself born in P'iya Qayma. As she married a boy from her own village, she never left P'iya Qayma. As a result, Doña Casimira can rely on relatives on both her mother's and her father's side to provide her with help.) Doña Casimira refers to the help she is receiving from Doña Simona and Doña Nieves as *ayni*. In exchange for their herding help she bring back goods from the city for them and when present in P'iya Qayma she often helps both women with herding their animals as well as assisting with other agricultural tasks, such as aiding Don Tomas in the harvesting of barley one moonlit night as described in the Introduction. This use of *ayni* exemplifies the continued utilisation and efficacy of the ethnic economy with regards to labour. Without the practice of *ayni*, Doña Casimira would struggle to maintain her flocks, and by extension, to protect her livelihood in P'iya Qayma.

Doña Casimira's work when in Oruro is very much focused on bringing back resources to her father's household or her own herd. Being unmarried, she

still belongs to her father's household in P'iya Qayma, where she has an adobe hut. In Oruro she stays in the house of her brother, Don Severino, unless she has a nanny job where accommodation is included. For Doña Casimira, the fact that such jobs are typically paid in kind is a serious drawback, as it makes saving money more difficult. Besides these considerations, she prefers to stay in Don Severino's house because of the comfort and familiarity it offers. Conversely, by letting his sister board at his house, Don Severino maintains some links with the *ayllu*.

Though most of the money Doña Casimira earns will be spent within her father's household, she does not hand her earnings over to her father. She largely controls how her money is spent and is assertive about investing in her own clothes, for example. However, most of her money goes towards making her and her father's life in P'iya Qayma possible. With the money she earns, she and her father buy farming and cooking equipment, everyday foodstuffs and goods. They also put aside a fund for travelling and she saves towards expanding her herd. Apart from earning a wage, she also takes on the responsibility of selling their potatoes, meat and animals in Oruro. These are sold straight off the truck to middlemen who appear at the truck stop and buy directly from the farmers.

Doña Casimira is an active member of the community and a participant in village life. The resources she earns from migrating are all invested back into P'iya Qayma rather than spent in town – on buying a house in Oruro, for example. In P'iya Qayma she is particularly involved in the church, and the year before I arrived she was one of the acting deacons. She is always present at sowing and harvest times and in addition to key agricultural events, she spends weeks, sometimes months, at a time in P'iya Qayma. As well as her considerable dedication to church matters, she always attends village, municipal and NGO meetings held in P'iya Qayma if she is in the village at the time.

In sum, Doña Casimira works in town but clearly still belongs to the *ayllu*. She does not suffer any obvious anxiety about being away from P'iya Qayma as

she is engaged in working the land and, apart from wages spent on clothing which gives her the appearance of a *cholita* when in town, her efforts remain oriented around *ayllu* life. While her father misses her female presence during the periods that she is in Oruro – he often bemoaned the many ‘female’ tasks he had to undertake himself when his daughter was away – Don Basilio regards his daughter as a good and strong *runa*. The fact that she is unmarried and childless does not in his eyes diminish her accomplishments as a *runa*. In contrast to what is asserted in the literature – that marriage is a key event within the *thaki* and a precondition to taking up the role of *jilanqo* (Abercrombie 1998; *Mallku* Sabino Veizaga), Doña Casimira, like Don Benito, the other single adult in P’iya Qayma, had unquestionable *runa* identities. The intact *runa* status of these unmarried adults contrasts with ethnographic evidence from other Andean communities where structural relationships, and in particular marriage, was seen as crucial to being *runa* (cf Canessa 1998; Harris 1978). They were both viewed as hard workers and contributors to life in P’iya Qayma, and the authority of neither was ever brought into question. So despite Casimira’s extended periods in Oruro, her engagement in external markets, her *cholita* dress and improved Spanish, she has not become *q’ara*. The fact that she engages in *llank’ay*, and that her efforts remain largely oriented around transforming the land in the *ayllu*, means that she is seen by herself, her father and other villages as a *runa*.

While Casimira’s change in clothes and speech did not greatly alter her identity in the village, it did so profoundly in town – this is an excellent example of the relational character of ethnicity in Bolivia. People in P’iya Qayma recognise that Casimira has transformed her urban identity, and become a *cholita* instead of *indio*, something which affords her higher status in the city. They are fully aware of the malleability of their urban ethnicity and the effect her clothing and language will have had on this, but as the techniques which transform ethnicity and identity in the city are different from those in the village, she has only shifted her identity in the urban arena; in P’iya Qayma she remains *runa*.

By contrast, the older brother with whom Doña Casimira lodges, Don Severino, is no longer part of the *ayllu*. Many years before my arrival in P'iya Qayma he had bought some land in Oruro and built a small house there. Eventually, he and his family moved there permanently. Don Severino was based in P'iya Qayma well into adulthood, working his land and taking part in communal duties. Don Basilio was keen to inform me that his eldest son had once been a very productive and respected villager. He had lived with his wife and children in a cluster of houses close to his father. It was in this house that, throughout my stay in P'iya Qayma, I stayed, at the invitation of his father and brother. Dresses, shirts and *chiquotes* (whips used for managing animals while herding and ploughing) were still hanging from the rafters, although the courtyard was overgrown and the stone walls were crumbling. Don Basilio was clearly provoked by the state of his son's house as he showed me round the house on my arrival. The day after I moved in Don Tiburcio came over and cleared the courtyard and re-built the stone walls. It is obvious that Don Severino is no longer investing in his *cocina* (household) in P'iya Qayma.

Don Severino has lived permanently in Oruro for over ten years now and has a small business buying, renting and selling '*minis*' (cars, put to use as public transport in the cities). He has become relatively wealthy from his *mini* business and the fact that he can drive into P'iya Qayma in his own car instead of travelling on the *ruta* marks him out from a vast majority of people in Kirkiyawí. But Don Basilio does not boast about the accomplishments of his son, of his success in building and running a business in Oruro. Instead he laments that his oldest son does not visit him often enough and that he does not help him with the land. Don Severino returns to visit P'iya Qayma about once a year, but he no longer comes back for any length of time to perform agricultural work. The only thing that now ties him to the land on a regular basis is the potatoes that Doña Casimira brings him from the fields in P'iya Qayma. As his work in Oruro is wholly geared around making a success of life there, it is no longer counted as *llank'ay* and his name is no longer on the list of men taking part in the rotative authority system. I was shown the carefully typed list several times. While it still included the late Don Pascual, Don

Tomás' father, Don Severino's name had a line through it. As Don Benito simply explained to me when I questioningly pointed to Don Severino's now barely visible name: '*Esto, Don Severino, ya no sirve.*' (This, Don Severino, no longer serves/is not fit for purpose now).

Unlike his brother, Don Basilio's second son, Don Tiburcio, has no intention of moving. He often voiced his intention to me: that his own two eldest sons, Santos (22) and Calixto (20), should return and work the land and that his two younger sons should not leave other than for their secondary education. He and his wife, Doña Vincenta, engage fully in *ayllu* life. They live off the land and take part in all aspects of village life. During the second half of my stay, Don Tiburcio was the acting *jilango*. While remaining firmly grounded in the *ayllu*, he regularly spends one or two of the rainy summer months in Oruro, labouring on construction sites, breaking stones or loading up trucks with building materials. This year, however, Don Tiburcio has found that working as an *ambulante* (peripatetic hawker), selling lemons, is far more profitable.¹⁰³ He claims that while he can clear only £4 (40 *bolivianos*) a day working in construction he can make a daily sum of as much as £8 (80 *bolivianos*), a considerable amount, selling lemons. The cash he makes will be put straight back into P'iya Qayma. His work on the construction site or as an *ambulante* can be characterised as *llank'ay*, since these efforts all result in his ability to work the land well. For instance, he recently purchased a young bull with money he had made in Oruro. During the ploughing and sowing season, this bull was used to turn the fields of not only Don Tiburcio and Doña Vincenta but also those belonging to his father and several other neighbours who borrowed the bull as part of an *ayni* agreement.

Dionisio, Don Basilio's youngest son, and the last child to whom Doña Demecia gave birth, is in a more ambiguous position. Now in his early twenties, he is a good deal younger than his three elder siblings. Doña

¹⁰³ *Ambulantes* travel on foot, do not have to pay for a stall at a market and often sell cigarettes and chewing gum in restaurants and bars. Many places ban *ambulantes* and there is less status working as an *ambulante* than having a stall in the market.

Casimira is very fond of her younger brother but is also convinced that his birth was the cause of their mother's illness and premature death. Dionisio is not yet married and moved to Oruro at an early age, before a man normally establishes a household, joining his older brother in Oruro in order to access secondary and tertiary education there. He has never worked the land in P'iya Qayma as an adult and never shouldered any authority role. In Oruro he lives with his brother and works for his brother's business, he is also studying part-time to become a hairdresser. His work is presently oriented around Oruro and making a future there. I never met Dionisio during my stay in P'iya Qayma, nor was there ever any mention of his visiting. What he is doing is not counted as *llank'ay* and his name had never appeared on the list of men eligible for *jilanqo* or *dirigente*. But Dionisio still has a little house in his father's yard. Decorated with posters and teenage boy paraphernalia, it is very much his space, and Don Basilio refers to the room as Dionisio's house and has no intention of changing it, in fact on occasion he clears up around the house in order that it look presentable. So Dionisio has a place to come back to and as he is still so young it is considered possible that he might return and become part of the *ayllu* again. He has neither neglected his communal duty nor left the land untouched for too long to prevent this, according to his father.

While Doña Casimira spends more than half the year in Oruro, her *runa* status is unquestioned. But Don Severino, who used to work the land and now runs a successful urban business and supports his younger brother, is no longer *runa* – his work is no longer *llank'ay*. When Don Tiburcio is loading a truck full of cement bags or selling lemons he is performing *llank'ay* – even though he is in that moment engaged in an activity that is no more agricultural in character than Don Severino's hiring out of *minis*, because what he is doing helps transform the land.

In a case like this, children were considered to be lost to their parents and to the village. But there were ways of reminding such children of their home and of attempting to tie them to it. Don Basilio often told me that he mourned the loss of his eldest and youngest sons, and how both sons, but in particular

Don Severino, had let him down at harvest time over many years. Don Severino always promised to attend the harvest but would then not arrive until several weeks later and announce that he would only be staying for a day or two. Doña Casimira once shared with me that her father had a strained relationship with both his Oruro-based sons, and that whenever he travelled into town he always visited his boys, but did so only briefly, for a cup of tea, and not many words were exchanged. He preferred to spend the nights at the house of his godson, Don Valerio (the husband of Doña Juana), who also has a house in Oruro but mainly resides in P'iya Qayma. Don Basilio's uneasy relationship with his two sons in Oruro testifies to the difficulty experienced by families separated by migration. Despite the difficult relationship, Don Basilio and Don Tiburcio would always ensure that Doña Casimira took potatoes and *chark'i* (sun-dried and salted meat, jerky) from P'iya Qayma for her brothers when travelling into town. Don Tiburcio told me that, since neither Don Severino or Dionisio were working the land, neither he, nor his father or sister, were obliged to send them anything from their fields and animals. Yet, he explained, he continued to do so as he felt that this was the right thing to do. Both he and Doña Casimira declared that they hoped that by feeding their brothers the potatoes from their fields they might influence them to return to P'iya Qayma next year and assist with the harvest. By feeding them from the land, Don Tiburcio is making an effort to bind his brothers to it and encouraging them to regain their *runa*-hood. Doña Casimira and Don Tiburcio thus help to connect their brothers in Oruro with their family and land in P'iya Qayma.

Feeding someone who is away from the land was a recurring theme. When Doña Juana and Don Valerio's eldest son, Eulogio, began his military service in Cochabamba they travelled to see him several times, always with great sacks of potatoes. While potatoes are not hard to come by in Cochabamba, they insisted that he eat the food produced on their fields. Again, although they do not demand a share of the crops, Don Tomás gives his uncles some potatoes every year. This is similar to the way Doña Vincenta receives potatoes from her birth village. This continued feeding of people who have not fulfilled their communal obligations illustrates how rules are constantly

stretched. Such flexible interpretation of rules serves to bind people to the land and protect their *runa-hood*. The act of being fed from the land is the inverse of *llank'ay*, it is the land transforming the people, and has been noted in much of the Andean literature (e.g. Allen 1988; Fernandez 1995; Sax 2011) (as discussed in Chapter 2 and 3) as a central constituent of the relationship between people and the land in the *ayllu*.

Q'ara land

Calestani (2009) argues that when rural dwellers lament the migration of their kin and neighbours, it is not the tasks that the migrants have left undone which is the focus of their concern, but rather the decline in their 'humanity' and decrease in quality of life. While this is true, the loss of their humanity is a direct result of not partaking in agricultural activity, so the undone task is at the centre of the problem.

While Don Basilio expressed concern for the fate of his migrant sons he was also angry with them, and especially with his eldest, Don Severino. When Don Severino failed to arrive in time for the weeks of harvest, Don Basilio could not hide his frustration with him and often complained about his shameful behaviour – 'The land should not be left like this,' he would tell me and shake his head in disbelief. As mentioned earlier, the (Andean Christian) genesis myth suggests that the purpose of human life is to work the land (Harris 2007); equally the purpose of land is to be worked by people. The fact that once cultivated land can turn into *q'ara*, just as humans can when agricultural activity ceases, illustrates the transformative power of *llank'ay*. The thoughts and actions of Doña Juana, described in the following pages, demonstrate the threat of previously domesticated fields transforming into *q'ara* land as experienced by those left behind.

Doña Juana has access to several fields in her childhood village of Jachavillque. The village is located across *ayllu* Kirkiyawi's border as well as the municipal border and the department border with Potosí. It is about an hour's walk on swift feet. She, together with her husband Don Valerio and all

their children, regularly make the trek during key agricultural periods. A considerable proportion of their food comes from Doña Juana's lands in Jachavillque. All of her direct family, including her elderly parents, have moved to La Paz and while they occasionally return to Jachavillque, they no longer take part in working the land. She has some extended family that still lives and work permanently in the village, but they work their own family lands. Doña Juana and Don Valerio have a large family and several teenage children to feed, as well as many hands that can work, so working all of Doña Juana's land arises in part out of ability and need, but it is also about something more, about the obligation to protect the land from becoming *q'ara*. I spent many days harvesting potatoes in Jachavillque with the family. Standing in a row along the furrows we all hacked into the ground just above the potato plant, then pushing the pick back a clump of earth including the cluster of potatoes appeared. Bending down we unearthed the potatoes and threw them into baskets that had been placed in front of us. The younger boys, Omar and Wilfredo, ran and collected the baskets and emptied them into big bags or splayed out sheets. They were often inattentive to their task and Doña Juana and her teenage daughter Rosalia had to shout at them to stop messing about and come and empty the baskets. There was much jovial shouting and laughing. Rosalia threw small potatoes after her brothers teasingly telling them they were lazy.

That evening Doña Juana, Rosalia, the two youngest children, Nestor and Imiliana, and I decided to spend the evening in Doña Juana's family home rather than trek back with Don Valerio and the boys to P'iya Qayma. Juana was visibly proud of her parental home, which is a very well made adobe hut with beautiful heavy wooden doors and intricately carved shelving units. Along one wall the big urns used to make *chicha* stood in a row. Jachavillque is a Catholic village where drinking is still permitted. That night as the sun set we could hear music from across the valley and Doña Juana called to all of us to come out and listen to it. In the distance we made out the musicians celebrating a local *fiesta*, climbing one of the winding uphill paths through the frost that hung in the air. 'My family are all in La Paz', Juana explained. 'I have

to come here because someone has to work this land; there is nobody else, just me.'

While harvesting during that day we had met her cousin and cousin's wife in a nearby field. Doña Juana had, over a lunch of *papa whatiya*, offered a section of her field to her cousin to grow *cañawa* in the following year. Cultivating *cañawa* is more labour intensive than potatoes and as her eldest son, Eulogio, had been drafted for his military duty, Doña Juana did not think her family would be able to work the field the following year. But her cousin declined the offer: they, too, had extra fields in his wife's village and were struggling to manage those they already had. Land that has been worked and prepared for generations should not be abandoned – the land itself demands attention. Doña Juana was concerned that she was already failing to fulfil her duties toward it by not taking part in the Catholic agricultural *fiestas*; as a Baptist she does not treat the land as her family previously did and as the rest of the villagers in Jachavillque still do. Doña Juana often spoke of her parents' land and the responsibility she feels toward it with an anxious sense that she is not fulfilling her obligations toward it. People like Juana have a strong sense of duty toward the land itself, possibly all the more so for having been left as its sole custodian in the absence of her siblings.

Doña Juana went to great lengths to prevent the fields of her parents from becoming *q'ara*, or un-cultured. But this avoidance did not arise out of an explicit fear of un-worked or 'wild' nature, nor did they have beliefs about the details of the consequences of being *q'ara*. There was no devil waiting to pounce on the *q'ara* people or land. Rather, being *q'ara* was sufficient damage in itself. The 'ghost village' of Jalsuri was not thought of as inhabited by ghosts or any other power which might do people harm. The avoidance of the village and the long walks round was more to do with a nagging sense of guilt, a feeling that here the people of Kirkiyawí had failed.

Conclusion

Migration, and the many forms it takes, is a constant topic of conversation in P'iya Qayma. The gossip about who is saving up to buy a house in Oruro, whose son or daughter has moved away, who has or has not been back for a visit, is ceaseless. It accompanies and is an essential adjunct to the more serious and concerned talk about what happens to the people who move away and who will shoulder the responsibility of working the land in the *ayllu* when the old people have passed away.

Even though migration is on the increase, a vast majority of this increase is accounted for by seasonal migration. Conditions appear to encourage the new upsurge in seasonal migration and the statistics support this interpretation (PDM 2007). The need and desire for money, education and healthcare; urban inclusion; improved transportation and communications networks; inalienable land titles; infrastructural investment in rural areas; re-validation of *ayllu* life; a long-standing commitment to and affection for the 'good life' in the *ayllu* and the desire to avoid the transformation of *runakuna* and *ayllu* land into *q'ara*, all add up to a context which encourages the maintenance of ties with both urban and rural worlds, namely seasonal migration.

According to people in P'iya Qayma, when someone is no longer transforming his land, he/she is no longer part of the *ayllu* and ceases to continue along the path, *thaki*, to full personhood. In reality there is no clearly defined point at which someone is no longer *runa* and no longer part of the *ayllu*. This is because the on-going migration is not simply one-stop, fuelled by one desire and aimed at one goal. Much work undertaken by the migrant is aimed, ultimately, at transforming the land in his *ayllu* and can therefore be seen as *llank'ay*, but other efforts are directed towards the purchase of 'urban' trappings such as a certain style of clothes, cars or maybe even new houses in migrant suburbs. Many people make an effort to remain part of the *ayllu* and manage to prolong their *runa*-hood, or never put it at risk at all. Equally, those left in the *ayllu* also make efforts to attempt to tie migrants to the land. They send them potatoes, care for their animals and may keep their

accommodation in good condition. While there is room to engage in urban labour markets and maintain *runa*-hood, there are limits. *Runa*-hood in Kirkiyawí is predicated to a large extent on the concept of *llank'ay* and while the concept of *llank'ay* includes a flexibility that allows for a degree of involvement in urban life, *llank'ay* also sets the limits of *runa*-hood. Only work which is able to transform the land in the *ayllu* is defined as *llank'ay*. And once someone's urban efforts cease to do this, their work no longer counts as *llank'ay* and their *runa*-hood is undermined. In addition the very act of migration increases the risk of land being left unworked and the responsibilities of those left behind to work that land in order to avoid it becoming *q'ara*. *Llank'ay*, then, is again defined by its ability to transform the land. It is also the defining activity of *runakuna* and crucial to the integrity of land.

In *ayllu* Kirkiyawí, the inhabitants specifically make a distinction between cultured and uncultured land and cultured and uncultured people, these local categories are not traps which one is locked into, but merely positions (cf Reeve 1988a; Rose 1988; Viveiros de Castro 1992, 1998, 2005). While the fluidity of un-cultured and cultured humans and land in Kirkiyawí, where both have the possibility to transform from un-cultured to cultured, and back again, might suggest that the nature/culture divide is non-existent, I argue that local people do conceptualise the world as divided into categories of cultured and un-cultured. In the highlands both people and land are subjects and objects, at different moments in time, and depending on their actions, they move between the two.

Chapter 8: Conclusion – The value of *llank'ay*

This thesis on work in an Andean *ayllu* was researched and written in the context of a political and cultural climate where indigeneity and indigenous life had gained positive currency on the national and international stage. Whilst this valorisation of rural 'traditional' life is very important to the future of individuals and communities in the rural Andes, it tells us very little about how indigenous life is valued from an emic perspective. Thus there exists a risk that the *ayllu* as a symbol, filled with hope and vigour, overshadows lived realities in the Bolivian high Andes.

Throughout the chapters I have described the local concept of work, *llank'ay*, its meanings and the effects that it has on several areas of life. Harris, following on from Graeber (2001), argues that in order to reach a satisfactory understanding of work we must put it in context of a broader understanding of value (2007: 137). This thesis has detailed the various ways in which *llank'ay* is seen to have value and why. Overwhelmingly it is a process which is awarded positive value, this is connected both to the outcomes of *llank'ay*: the transformative processes that create *runakuna* and agentive, historicised and productive land; and the experience of *llank'ay*: the shared efforts, pains and rewards in the field and the sociality and communality which this creates. By understanding the practice of *llank'ay*, and its outcomes, as everyday and 'iterative,' I emphasise the processual nature of personhood, relationships and landscape in *ayllu* Kirkiyawí. Built up over time, *runakuna*, friendships and 'taskscape' are products not only of ritual moments or cosmological structures, but also of years of doing *llank'ay* in an *ayllu*.

In each chapter we have seen how *llank'ay* interacts with a different theme. In order to not dislocate *llank'ay* from surrounding influences and in particular from lived lives, this final chapter provides a summing up in reference to the various ways in which the concept of *llank'ay* is deeply

embedded in local, national and global contexts. In Kirkiyawī, the character of *llank'ay*, and the agency it exerts, is not static or unaffected by surrounding structures, history and trends. Instead it is wrapped up in events such as the two Christian conversions – to Catholicism and later to Baptism. It is intertwined, as well, with other national and historical influencing factors, including migration patterns, shifts in religious values and social ambitions, validation of indigenous livelihoods and infrastructural investments in rural areas.

I have argued that *runahood* and an emic perspective on ethnicity can only be fully understood in reference to *llank'ay*, since the defining feature of being a *runa* is not only about a set of social relationships but also about a physical transformation of the self and the land, the skill, knowledge and ability to transform that land into something productive and thus the fulfilment of a sacred obligation of religious blessings which is, in and of itself, a worthwhile way to live your life, and also a path to salvation.

Llank'ay also has the power to animate the land and creates an Ingoldian temporalised 'taskscape' where memories and histories are stored. As people grow and transform the land around them, and simultaneously develop their *runahood*, they work within the context of the *llank'ay* performed during the previous year, decade or century. The physicality of labour, the sharing of substances between a person and the earth during agricultural work - sweat and spit in the ground, dirt under the finger nails, cracked feet - all tie people to the land that they work.

In addition to historical, physical and emotional bonds, *llank'ay* creates socio-legal ties between people and land. Within a set of preconditions of rights to land and power in the *ayllu*, *llank'ay* surfaces as integral to claims to fields, thus evidencing its high value. As exemplified by the *oca* theft in Chapter 4, *llank'ay* carries more clout than inheritance or communal rules.

Llank'ay both illuminates the effects of the Baptist conversion, and is itself re-

shaped and re-interpreted according to the shift in values which have occurred as part of the Baptist conversion. A focus on *llank'ay* enables us to understand how agentive land is sustained in a religious world where sacred land ought to have been purged from 'supernatural' powers. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, a vernacular landscape which is constantly engaged with through labour remains unequivocally powerful. Given that its powers are activated through *llank'ay*, the scaling back of overt rituals has had less of an effect on the powers of chthonic powers, such as the *apu*, than might be expected. Crucial to the power of *llank'ay* in P'iya Qayma is the character of its value in a Baptist community. The Protestant conversion valorises agricultural work and emphasises its link to possible salvation. While the conversion may affect some aspects of communal cohesion negatively, it also empowers *ayllu* life by highlighting the purity and Godliness of agricultural labour. I describe how the conversion has had several kinds of impact, and argue that its effects in any given place and time is highly contingent on variable factors such as transport, personality and availability of urban pastors and reception of evangelical radio stations. The value of labour and the intimate connection with the land affects how people approach Baptism and how they reject Catholic traditions.

Chapters 6 and 7 describe how the concept and value of labour affects non-agricultural work, how these non-agricultural activities are understood within the paradigm of *llank'ay*, and in turn how they inform and shape the character of *llank'ay*. Chapter 6 describes how day-to-day work breaks down organisational and structural divides. In P'iya Qayma, for example, the *ayllu* and the union merge. One of the most important reasons for this conflation is that people understand and assess work undertaken within these organisations in terms of *llank'ay*, that is the ability to transform land, rather than in relation to the divergent ideological underpinnings of the political movements within these organisations.

Chapter 7 details how *llank'ay* offers insight into the effects of migration on individuals' identities, ethnicity and personhood, and the burden that those

who remain behind are left with. While being *runa* is fundamentally about rural life, migration does not result in a clear-cut loss of *runahood*. I show how, at least from a local perspective, migrants can retain *runahood* as long as they continue to work towards the transformation in the *ayllu*.

The meaning and definition of *llank'ay* is of course shifting and contested. For instance, the increasing ease and therefore prevalence of seasonal and short-term migration has resulted in several non-agricultural, urban activities being classed as *llank'ay*, as villagers are able to return home regularly and direct their profits toward transforming the land of the *ayllu*. When bulls, hacks and picks can be bought in urban markets for money, working to secure that money also becomes a way of doing *llank'ay*. Connected to this, the creation of TCOs has also enabled temporary migration by the creation of an inalienable legal relationship between people and land which offers security to seasonal migrants. Other factors that have influenced and stretched the definition of *llank'ay* are the increased funding to local municipalities and the presence of NGOs that have the resources to initiate infrastructural projects that transform land. Working with these organisations becomes another new mode of doing *llank'ay*. Zooming out even more, all these factors are bound up in the shifts of global and national identity politics, and the increasing or decreasing valuations of indigenous/indian/peasant life and ways of organising work.

So whilst *llank'ay* constantly structures and sets the limits for personhood, agentive land and sociality, its limits are stretched and tested in order to fit in with new ways of transforming the land. Whilst I do show how *runahood* can be retained outside of the *ayllu*, it remains crucially contingent on the physical *ayllu*. I thus distance myself from propositions, such as those made by Salman and Zoomers, that the *ayllu* is defined in terms of people and relationships and can therefore be transposed to urban life (2003). In sum, *llank'ay*, much like the *ayllu* itself, is a flexible concept; yet, again like the *ayllu*, it is rooted in the land.

I argue that that the value of labour lies primarily in its power to transform, secondary to this are the formal structures and organisation of labour's ability to create and sustain social relationships and communality. However, I do not portray *llank'ay* as an individualising force; instead I have described how sociality and *ayllu* life is contingent on everyday processes. It is about living everyday lives, side by side, with many intensely shared experiences, values and goals: values that include a commitment to processes of transformation, of practised identities. I argue that symbolic and formal structures, such as the reciprocal relationships of *ayni*, *padrazgo* and *compadrazgo*. exist and function only within a context of everyday life - of harvesting a field together in the strong midday sun, of sharing that very material and physical experience and evaluating it in a similar way, of being happy together as the earth is transformed, of becoming a more skilled and practiced *runa*, of imagining the coming salvation. Everyday *ayllu* life is shared – people are physically bound to each other and the land around them. Daily work, *llank'ay*, is what keeps *runakuna*, relationships and the land vital and relevant.

Epilogue

One summer afternoon whilst out herding with Doña Nieves and her three children, rain slowly began to trickle, Doña Nieves glanced up at the sky and then quickly turned to gather her things and the baby, she shouted to Zulma and Israel who were playing some distance off and told me to come with her, we all scrambled up a muddy hill and just managed to take cover under a big jutting out rock before the skies opened up and torrential rain hammered down. But a moment before the heavy downpour ruined all visibility, Doña Nieves touched my arm and silently pointed to the sky and there high up above us soared a condor. Back at the homestead, we told Don Tomás what we had seen and he told us that he too had met the condor a few days back. While he had been herding up by Warp'iyta, the condor had swooped down in an attempt to capture one of his young sheep. Don Tomás was sure it was the same condor that we had seen. Once, he told me, many condors lived in the hills around P'iya Qayma but now there was only one left. He paused, and then added that the big toads have also disappeared. It is true that although you can hear the sound of the frogs croaking by the river at night during the summer months, the toad is an uncommon sight. The toad is widely associated in the Andean region with *Pachamama* and the condor is a sacred leadership figure. 'Where have they gone?' I asked Don Tomás – 'They have both gone to war' Don Tomás replied, 'they are fighting for the land.'

Throughout centuries the *ayllu* has constantly had to defend its land, at times they have been victorious but they have also suffered many defeats. In her work on borders and battles, Harris (2000) argues that the *ayllu* is characterised by the intense sense of belonging the group has to its particular bit of land and the willingness to die for it is a key ingredient in *ayllu* culture. Today the Bolivian *ayllus* are facing several possible challenges, among other things: out-migration, laws of de-centralisation and stronger union influence which have re-configured local power dynamics, and high levels of

conversion to Protestantism. The relationship the people of *ayllu* Kirkiyawí have with the state, both central government and local government, their suspicion of any new legislation which involves them, their non-committal manner towards NGOs and various social movements, should all be understood in light of a long history of battling in defense of their land. They have not only fought external powers but also other *ayllus*, as was the case in the battle with Jachavillque some 30 years ago over the communal fields which were located in the border area. And as the historical documents of the *Tercera Visita* show us, Kirkiyawí lost lands in the first half of the 17th century to *ayllu* Sakaka. Although I have argued that these various factors do not inherently threaten the base of the *ayllu* or indicate the imminent demise of a way of life, they nonetheless bring changes to *ayllu* life. When I asked Don Tomás whom the condor and toad were fighting, he shrugged and said that he was not sure, but added that they would probably not be back soon.

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When the winter nights were at their longest and the village in the firm grip of frost my fieldwork period was coming to an end. One of the last mornings, the day before I was set to leave, I walked up to the house of Don Tomás and Doña Nieves to find them in the process of slaughtering a sheep. The throat had been slit and the blood was slowly pouring into a bowl by the sheep's head, its legs still kicking. The children were standing around looking on, Zulma had already poked the open wound and dipped her feet into the pool of blood, and Israel clutched his mother's dress wide-eyed. Enthusiastically Don Tomás explained that today they were going to feed me; that they needed to feed me before I left. Once the sheep was drained of blood, Don Tomás set about skinning it and cutting it up. The intestines were emptied and hung up to dry next to the heart and the other internal organs on the washing line, the dogs looked on with great interest. Doña Nieves carried the head into one of the storage sheds, '*sopapaj, misk'i es*' (it is tasty for soup), she told me cheerfully. Potatoes were brought out to be scrubbed, and Don

Tomás told me that we were going to eat all the different colours of potatoes from many different fields. Doña Nieves displayed them all on her weave on the ground ‘Bonito es, bonito es’ (it is beautiful, it is beautiful) she said proudly and smiled, and indeed they ranged from the deepest brown, to rich purple, red, pink, orange, yellow and the small stripy *papa lisa*. Neither Don Tomás nor Doña Nieves went herding that day but instead all morning was spent preparing this large meal – one of my last in the village.

The meat and potatoes were baked in the big, outdoor, clay oven which had once belonged to Don Tomás’ father, Don Pascual. Whilst the food was cooking Don Tomás brought out his *charango*, he played some tunes, Zulma danced and Doña Nieves and I chewed coca leaves and shared some cigarettes. We ate for hours that afternoon. Don Tomás was keen that I try every different kind of potato. Each colour comes from a different field, he explained, so you must eat them all – *mikhuyku!* (Q) (eat). It was one of the best meals I had during my two years in Bolivia. When we had finished all the food and the sun was beginning to set, Don Tomás turned to me and told me I was free to go as I had eaten well, then he handed me the feather of a condor which he kept displayed in his kitchen hut. I took the feather and said goodbye to Don Tomas and Doña Nieves for the last time. So for a final time I walked the little path between the rocks and over the stream, passed the school yard, Don Basilio’s house, and over the wall to my own little house. The next morning, minutes before I was set to leave, having divided up my belongings such as the straw mattress, gas canister and cooker, radio and blankets between my neighbours, Rosalia came running out to me. Thrusting one of her weaves in my arms she smiled widely and told me never to forget them. I dug into my purse and offered her the going rate for the weave, ‘*gracias*’ she said, and took the money. Holding my weave and my feather and my notebooks, but not much else, my stomach still full from yesterday’s meal, I boarded the truck. The engine started and we pulled away from P’iya Qayma and set off down the dirt track to Oruro.

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Loose Material: Map of P'iya Qayma and Bookmark